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NED BENTLEY.

A NOVEL.

VOL. I.

NED BENTLEY,

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

J. AMPHLETT.

A friendless son,
O! Britain, through thy little bustling world,
Shapes his adventrous course.

VOL. I.

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1808.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

DEDICATION.

To the Right Hon. R. B. SHERIDAN.

A MAN whose object was to court favor rather than fame, would never select you as a person to whom he would choose to dedicate his labours. He must be aware that the habits of your mind would prove inimical to any claims on your notice beyond those of single literary desert. By inscribing the following pages to you, therefore, I shall not be accused of any unworthy motives. They are written, however faint the effort, in the spirit of those prin-

ples which you have uniformly approved; and which are characteristic of genuine English society.

In soliciting the favor to affix your name to the work, I was referring its principles to a very powerful authority. For the honor of your permission so far to recommend it; and not less for the prompt politeness with which that permission was granted, I am proud to subscribe myself,

Sir,

Your most obliged and grateful servant,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

TO the immediate circle of the author's friends, who are acquainted with the irregular manner in which the following work was written, it is perhaps unnecessary to offer any apology for a very numerous list of errors; and beyond that circle all apology is useless. That the world has nothing to do with the manner in which a writer composes a work, is known and felt by every man who is in the habit of giving his opinions to the public. Perhaps a very exact degree of correctness

in a novel, which is commonly read one day and forgotten the next, offers a reward very disproportioned to the labour.

The author is aware that the unconnected periods in which the following pages were written, and the circumstance of his not being allowed the common benefit of correction, will occasion a number of *inconsistences* in the work, which, if it ever reach a *second edition*, shall be removed;---if it do not, it would be to little purpose that they were absent. The recent influx of works of this description has stript them of all particular claims to notice; and they are generally classed in a slovenly *Monthly Catalogue* with

party pamphlets and sixpenny sermons. In the humble fame therefore which now attaches to them, (espousing for a moment the cause of novel-writers in general) as we look forward to no particular approbation, we ought perhaps to escape any severity of censure. But this, unfortunately, is not the case. A reviewer who would commend the good motives of a sermon, though it contained scarce a line of common sense, turns with as much merciless malice on an indifferent novel, as though it were the advanced guard of a swarm of locusts. A novel-writer, therefore, enters the list of authors with his mind made up to receive every species of ill-usage: ---Like an ill-used ass by the road-

side, who screws up his hide in expectation of receiving a blow from every person who goes near him.

Perhaps there is no species of literary labour, in which the public morals are more widely concerned than in novel-writing. Novels and newspapers are become the necessaries of life. They are the rudiment books, from which, in the first stage of reflecting life, we receive our notions of the world. They are the true or false lens from which we take a peep into the wide scenes of active society. It is to no purpose that they are contemned; they are alike procured by the high and the low; the wise and the foolish:

And even by the most learned they are occasionally, at once read, enjoyed and despised. Perhaps this wide sphere of our power ought to entitle us to a little more respect; and what cannot be granted to our ability, ought to be conceded to our influence. Be that as it may, a novel that has no tendency to debauch the public mind; that conveys no false pictures of life; that invades not the sacred haunts of any private society, ought not to meet with any cavalier treatment merely because it is *a novel*; though it were not designed with remarkable brilliance, and executed with proportionate power. If the following pages are not calculated to promote any particular moral pur-

pose, they are at least not designed to effect any immoral end. The author is content if his work be allowed to class among the least objectionable ones of its kind; if it amuse its many respectable readers, and leave only such impressions on the mind as are favorable to the cause of virtue and of honor.

Stafford, Oct. 2, 1808.

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X. O.

ERRATA.

The Reader is desired to make the following Corrections.

VOL. I.

Page	line	
4	4	*for* dinner *read* tea.
8	24	*for* Miss M. *read* Miss L.
15	4	*for* shrugling *read* shrugging.
16	19	*for* branches *read* branched.
21	21	*for* to *read* too.
34	9	*after* voice *read* were.
66	5	*for* condemn *read* condemns.
Do.	7	*for* determine *read* determines.
Do.	8	*for* they know *read* it knows.
Do.	9	*for* ditto *read* ditto.
82	9	*for* dare to *read* durst.
91	9	*after* time *omit* against.
118	9	*for* less *read* more.
153	7	*for* undone *read* outdone.
160, 188	6, 10	*for* adventurous *read* adventrous.
184	3	*for* pillow *read* curtain.
192		*from the bottom line read* life, and perceive that it required little either of, &c.
205	18	*for* here *read* hence.

VOL. II.

Page	line	
22	15	*for* his heart *read* it.
31	13	*for* consequeace *read* consequence.
55	19	*for* necleus *read* nucleus
75	19	*for* there *read* thence.
113	7	*for* with what a *read* the.
122	10	*for* was *read* were.
127	22	*for* heavy *read* heaving.
135	19	*for* pitched *read* slung.
175	2	*for* shewed *read* shewn.
218	11	*for* exists *read* exist.
231	15	*for* rose *read* raised.

ERRATA.

VOL. III.

Page	[illegible] line	2 *for* to *read* for.
44		14 *for* the mysterious *read* the supposed mysterious.
62		21 *for* him *read* he.
66		6, 7 *for* taking *read* to take.
Do.		7, 8 *for* returning *read* to return.
71		7 *for* have *read* had.
72		8 *for* ourselves *read* themselves.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL

CHAPTER I.

SEE, mother, how it snows, cried Mary, whispering; the coach will go softer when there is a little more snow on the ground. O! what a jolt! I wonder it did not awake my father.--Helen, why don't you talk? You generally talk the most.

Your sister is more thoughtful, and is afraid to disturb her father. Put up the glass, my dear Helen.

Helen sighed, and put up the chaise window.

Look at this naked boy, mother, continued Mary; he runs by the side

of the chaise to beg. I should like to give him something, but my father says it only encourages them in idleness.

Perhaps your father was right, my dear, but——

But what, mother? My father is asleep now; shall I throw him these halfpence?

Yes do, Mary, cried Helen; I have no less than sixpence, and I'm afraid he would not find it in the snow.

Do, my dears, as you would if your father were awake. Helen and Mary look at each other.

I dare not then, says Mary.

He'll run on till we give him something, says Helen, letting the chaise window softly down.

Mr. Mordent coughed. The chaise window was put up again.

See how the snow beats against his face, said Helen, sighing.

It is a hard winter, said Mrs. Mor-

dent; give me the halfpence, my dear.

(They were thrown out at the chaise window.)

Thank you, my dear mother, said Mary.

He has run a long way, said Helen.

O! he is coming again, cried Mary.

He runs up to the chaise window, and making his obeisance retires.

I'm glad he is thankful, said Helen.

Why? said Mrs. Mordent.

Because---I don't know, but I think it does them more good when they are thankful.

The chaise now approached Stratford upon Avon. It was after one o'clock in the dark days of December, and Mrs. Mordent, awaking her husband, petitioned to remain at Stratford during the night, as the snow began to get thick on the ground, and the nights

were extremely dark. The petition, after a few surly objections, was complied with.

Arrived at the inn, and dinner being ordered, they retired to make those adjustments of dress that are so seasonable a relief to the body after the fatigue of travelling.

All that it is necessary for the reader to know of the family to whom we have introduced him is very soon told. ---Mr. Mordent was a merchant in Birmingham, and had been uncommonly successful in that department of its manufacture which depended on fashion. He was fortunate enough to decline business at the time his business was on the point of declining itself; and having realized a very handsome fortune, he retired into a remote part of the county, to enjoy his "ease and dignity" in the prime of life.

Being now arrived at the age of

forty, he began to throw his eyes around him in search of a partner, whom he appeared to desire, rather as a superintendant of his comforts than a partaker of them. He was fortunate enough to have rendered an essential service to an orphan daughter, and only child, of a deceased clergyman. Her gratitude rendered her kind, and her conciliating manners happened to square with his notions of female perfection.

Miss Leigh was in the five and twentieth year of her age, and possessed a beauty in her person which had neither been marred by disposition nor tarnished by time.

The following short conversation led to that indissoluble alliance on which the destinies of man may be said to turn; the best motives and rewards of action tend to, and centre in, this common end and object of life.

SCENE, THE TEA ROOM.

Mr. M. This call was very kind of you, Miss Leigh; you are just arrived in time to make a bachelor's tea.

Miss L. I have taken tea, sir, but have no objection to make it for you.

Mr. M. I am the more indebted to your compliance. It is so much the province of the ladies, and becomes them so well, that I never relish my tea out of their company. I have no sisters nor cousins who can make any stay in their visits, and it is the most solitary joyless meal that I take, because it more reminds me of their absence.

(Tea is brought in----a pause.)

Miss L. You drink sugar I think, sir.

Mr. M. Yes, *sweet* Miss Leigh.

Miss L. Cream, sir?

Mr. M. Yes, *fair* lady.

Miss L. You are complimentary this evening, sir.

Mr. M. Not by design, madam; I feel an exhileration of spirits that is not usual. It appears as though the irascibilities of my temper were annihilated, and all the springs of good humour impelled me to enjoyment, without any ascertainable cause,--unless it may be found in *yourself*, madam.

Miss L. Nay, sir---this I protest is---

Mr. M. I protest, Miss Leigh, that I am weary of the woe-begone gloom and monotony of my life. Till lately the hopes and anxieties of business wholly occupied my mind, and left no loop for love to hang its cares upon. But *now* I feel a loneliness and solitude of mind that prey on ten hours out of every four and twenty. In these ruminations I have thought on matrimony,--on happiness,---and on *you*, Miss Leigh.

Miss L. On me, sir! I--beg your pardon. Give me leave---to send you this cup, sir. *(In her agitation lets it fall.)*

Mr. M. You have broken a *set*, madam! It was a remarkably valuable one, but——a set of china is easily replaced, and were I to omit this opportunity, such another might never again occur. You are going I understand, Miss Leigh, to make a visit of some length to a relation in Wales. My best wishes will accompany you; but before you leave I must beg permission to address you occasionally by letter, as I shall be anxious to hear of your health.

Miss Leigh granted the request, and rose, somewhat embarrassed, to depart.

Mr M. (rising) I wish you were not going into Wales, Miss Leigh.

Miss L. My promise is given, sir.

Mr. M. The length of your stay likewise?

Miss M. No, sir.

Mr. M. Let me hope that it will be short; a month at most. Shall I fetch you at the expiration of a month?

Miss L. I thank you, n-no, sir;---I will not trouble you.

Mr. M. That *no* methought was half a *yes*. Beside, I think I should like to see the country. Shall I come? (insinuatingly.)

Miss L. If you *wish to see the country*, certainly, sir.

Miss Leigh approached the door; Mr. Mordent held her hand. It trembled as he pressed it to his lips, and he said FAREWELL with more real tenderness of voice than he ever spoke before.

Mr. Mordent wrote three times every week, and Miss Leigh answered all his letters. At the expiration of, not a "little month," Mr. Mordent waited on his fair correspondent, and after making the tour of South Wales,

brought her home, and gave her "a local habitation and a *name*."

When a woman is married, and finds herself tied to a man who has no resources of thought, and who quickly abandons himself to those destinies of a sluggish mind, the bottle and its jovial companions, the time that she must necessarily spend alone, is favourable to meditation. Her mental powers begin to expand, and she soon finds the level of their strength. When she discovers the distance that is placed between them; that there exists no point of thought in which they can come in contact; the strings of affection are snapped, and the ties of law are *felt*; not without pain, though, perhaps, without complaint. She turns the full tide of her affections on her children, and, with a correctness of conduct peculiar to English women, devotes the

whole of her time to their education. The reader perhaps cannot direct his attention to the circle of his friends without discovering an instance. Such was the situation of Mrs. Mordent.

At the time our history commences, Mr. Mordent had turned his fiftieth year. He had been to London to pay the tribute of a brother to the remains of a sister; the last of his family.--- Further it is not necessary our readers should know. Mr. Mordent began to experience the ennui of solitude; he had not felt the exhileration of public company for upwards of a month.-- For the further developement of character, the reader is referred to the narrative.

Our travellers met over their tea. Mary and Helen were frequently on the point of breaking out into some re-

mark on the unshod urchin they had seen on the road, when the silent and sulky countenance of their father checked the generous purpose.

I wonder where beggars sleep; at length said Helen.

O! law, said Mary, our William once told me that they paid a penny a night, and that there are houses in every town where they take them in.

Yes, said Mr. Mordent, and they get drunk with the rest of their day's wages.

Can beggars afford to get drunk? said Helen.

Yes, replied Mr. Mordent; they live better than honest people who work for their money, as long as fools encourage them.

Helen reddened.

I wonder there are not more beggars then, said Mary, if they live so comfortably.

They don't live comfortably, my

dear, said Mrs. Mordent; they sometimes may live very well for a few days, but sometimes they starve perhaps for a week.

What would they do, said Helen, if nobody would encourage them?

Starve or go to the parish, said Mr. Mordent.

And would they rather starve for a week than go to the parish? said Mary. —Mary received no answer.

Mr. Mordent drank off his last cup of tea with increased ill-húmour. Every body, he said, should work and make themselves useful.

The tone of his last sentence seemed to forbid all further remark.

I wonder, thought Helen, if that naked urchin would "work and make himself useful."

A long silence ensued, which was at length interrupted by the arrival of several chaises in the inn yard. Soon after a complimentary card was brought to Mr. Mordent, from several travellers, soliciting, as a traveller, that he would smoke a friendly pipe with a small party of gentlemen who remained there for the night.

The invitation was accepted. Mr. Mordent having joined his new friends, Mrs. Mordent and her daughters retired at an early hour to rest.

Soon after eight o'clock in the morning, the faint beams of the sun gleamed feebly through the frozen windows of the inn. Mrs. Mordent and her two daughters arose, and as Mr. Mordent seldom left his bed before eleven, they determined on a short walk before breakfast, a habit to which they had been accustomed. Being comfortably

muffed and tippeted they encountered the "shrewd" morning air. It was a comfortable sight to see the people run *starvling* along, *shrugling* up their shoulders as though to shelter their heads from the cold. Helen and Mary ran by the side of their mother in a short and quick step, more for the sake of exercise than speed; while they puffed out their breath to see it steam through the frozen air. They soon reached the extremities of the town, and their blood began to circulate with a pleasant warmth, and their faces to burn with the newly impelled current of life. Their old companion Fido, whom, we beg pardon for not having introduced to our readers before, ran frisking before them, ploughing up the frozen snow with his nose, as tho' he recognized it in his memory, as a novelty but seldom enjoyed. There is a satisfaction derived from walking

early in a morning, that is rather difficult to account for, or to describe. It perhaps arises from a conscious enjoyment of a portion of *time*, to which we are commonly dead, and which can, with some people, be scarcely considered as attached to existence. It may be called the refuse of our rest, from which, commonly, we neither derive strength as repose, nor enjoyment as action.

Our travellers, with a view to enjoy, with less interruptions, their morning's walk, deviated from the public road into a solitary lane; which, being more exposed to the sun, from its scanty hedges, seemed to invite the vagrant mind. Having pursued this lane till it branches off in several directions, they were on the point of returning, when their attention was arrested by the barking of Fido. Fido, " even from

"his puppyish days," had conceived a kind of antipathy to the ragged personages of beggars: he turned a watchful and suspicious eye on their actions, and on seeing one, would immediately begin to bark, as though to excite suspicion in others. Our travellers soon discovered the object of his anger. It was a little ragged boy who was sitting on a small turfed bank, from which, with much formality, he had cleared away the snow. Helen and Mary immediately declared him to be the same who ran by the side of the chaise. He was bareheaded, and eating a cake, and had thrown several bits to Fido to appease his rage. But Fido was not to be bribed; it only increased his anger, as though he felt the insult that was offered to his integrity. When Mrs. Mordent approached, he ceased his suit, apparently well satisfied in having done his duty. Helen and Mary

looked up at their mother, as though they knew that she would say all that they wished.

Mrs. Mordent threw an observing eye on this " Son of the desart." He appeared to be about ten years of age; possessed a bold and rapid eye, that he alternately bent on the mother and the daughters, and which met the glances of enquiry, without rudeness and without fear. His countenance, which, though the summer's sun and winter's wind had embrowned and hardened, relaxed into gentleness beneath the observation of visitants so mild. The comeliness of health glowed in his cheek, though his dark brown locks were white with the morning hoar.

Where do your father and mother live, my little fellow? said Mrs. Mordent.

I got none.

What is become of them?

I never had no father.

What became of your mother?

She cut her throat.

Mrs. Mordent shuddered, and Helen and Mary clung close to her side.

Where do you live? continued Mrs. Mordent.

I don't live nowhere now.

Where do you sleep?

I sleeps in Thomas's stable along with the hackney.

Along with the hackney! exclaimed Helen—why don't he hurt you in the night?

No Miss, he knows me; I helps him to his corn, and cleans him for Thomas.

Where does Thomas live? asked Mrs. Mordent.

He lives at his master's.

And is Thomas very good to you?

Yes; when I don't get no money he brings me some scraps in his pocket.

Where did you live before you came to Thomas? *(He returned no answer.)*

Are you ashamed to tell?

No, if you won't send me back again.

Well we won't then, said Helen and Mary together.

I run'd away from the workhouse.

Why did you run away?

Because they buried my mother.

Because they buried your mother! —Where did they bury her?

The tears came into his eyes as he bent them to the ground, for HE SAT UPON HER GRAVE! His eye supplied the expression of his tongue, and he made himself most eloquently understood. Mrs. Mordent and her daughters were not indifferent spectators of such a

scene; the former knew not how to proceed; she felt an interest in the fate of such an outcast that she could not resist. The son! the friend! the child of nobody! Brought into the world in disgrace, and left unacknowledged by rich or poor, to explore his way through the world, without the encouragement of hope or the sympathy of aid; to live unclaimed, or to perish unheeded! What a post to start from into existence! No connections to raise, and none to sink him, in his adventures through life. The paths of honour and disgrace before him, but without any friendly hand to warn or direct. Where it is a man's lot to toil without hope, and labour without reward, let us not wonder that he should often sink into the arms of indolence for repose; nor to harshly condemn him if he pause in the paths of right, when there is nothing to impel him

forward but the severest admonitions of a virtue, which, in this world, is neither duly acknowledged nor repaid. Were we to judge the higher spheres of life with the same severity that we do the lower ones, who should escape rebuke?

Such were the thoughts of Mrs. Mordent as her eye dwelt on the apparently contented and unthinking countenance of this orphan outcast. She respected even the feelings of a beggar boy, and intimated to her daughters not to say any thing alluding to his mother. She asked him if he should like a home?

Yes, if there was never a master.

Why did he dislike a master?

Because they always *knocked him about* so.

Truth is always simple. It flows spontaneously from the heart in tones

that are modulated by our feelings, and never fails to inspire the confidence to which it is entitled. During this time Mrs. Mordent had resolved in her own mind, to risk an appeal to her husband in the boy's behalf. She asked the little urchin if he were willing to go with her. He intimated his readiness by his manner more than his words, but said he must go and bid good bye to Tummas. The boy's gratitude was too amiable to meet with a denial, and as he said it was *none hardly* to the barn, our visitors accompanied him. He cast a melancholy glance at his mother's grave as he departed; the deep drawn sigh arose from his breast, but his native fortitude and his new hopes checked its progress and dissipated its force. His grief shed a charm over his new prospects, and his new prospects softened without subduing his grief.

On the way Helen and Mary and Fido kept close to their new acquaintance Mary asked him if the snow did not starve his feet. "*Nat much*" was the answer. What was his name? "Ned." Ned what? "Ned Bentley." Did he ever run after the coaches to beg? "Yes" *(looking significantly at the dog.)* On being questioned further he told them that the dog would not let him take up the money for a *good bit*; that he marked the place, and came up to thank them, because he knew the dog would not stop long. His artless manners, and his free and spontaneous answers, denoted a tractable mind.

They approached the barn where Thomas was thrashing. Surprised at such an unusual visit, Thomas inclined his body to something like a bow, which, though rather awkward, was

more indicative of respect than the graceful curves of more accomplished personages. Mrs. Mordent told him that she was come to take away his little friend if he could spare him. Ned went up to Thomas and took hold of his hand, but his heart was too full for utterance. Thomas was a kind soul; he could not disguise it, though he was ashamed of his weakness.

He is a mighty good lad, said Thomas; though, because he's a bastard, nobody notices him besides me.

There is more merit then in your kindness Thomas, said Mrs. Mordent. I don't know ma'am; he's of great service to me, though poor soul I can't give him any thing beside his lodging in the stable. Our christian folks buried his mother in the lane here, after she was drove beside herself by their

hard-heartedness, and killed herself.— I had rather be buried without a coffin like her, than with one in some of our overseers place.

Did they bury her without a coffin? said Helen.

Yes, Miss, God bless you; they bundled her into a bit of a hole about two foot dip, and drove a big stake thro' her, and put a huge ugly stone flat on her face. Damn 'em I say, though she was no relation of mine. I beg pardon for swearing ma'am, but I don't think it christian-like; for we're all of us sinful enough, and should be more charitable one with another.

Mrs. Mordent sighed, and Helen and Mary appeared terrified, and clung close to their mother. They say, continued Thomas, that *she walks* about these lanes at night, but if she does,

she only appears to those who have done her harm, for I have walked at all hours when it has been as *unkid* as could be, and the moon shined round her grave, but I never saw nothing, for I never did her no harm poor soul, and she'll never hurt me.

What was the cause of her misfortunes? said Mrs. Mordent.

Why you see ma'am she was overcomed by somebody, who was a *gentleman* I suppose, for she never would swear her child, and never has swore it to this day, and that was the reason the overseers used her so barbarously. God forgive 'em, let 'em be who they will I say, for they'll stand in need of a mortal deal of mercy for all their wickedness.

Was any body suspected?

Its hard to suspect any body ma'am, of such horrid sins, but the young 'squire of the mill was talked of, and some said big Sam was the man, and that he threatened to murder her if she swore it to him, but God knows who they be, whether high or low, and let 'em be where they will.

Her name was Bentley, I believe?

Yes ma'am, Poll Bentley; as good natured a gain soul as ever lived as a body may say. But it was going to the hall, that was the undoing of her.

Who lives at the Hall?

Farmer Dudfield, ma'am; he sees a deal of company from all parts; but he's a hard-hearted soul.

What is your name, my good man?

Thomas Peart, at your sarvice.

Mrs. Mordent put half-a-guinea in his hand and prepared to depart. Ned,

whose eye had beamed indignant thro' his tears at the above recital, shook Thomas by the hand as he looked up in his face. Thomas could only gripe it in return and mutter an unintelligible *God bless you;* returning madam a suffocation of thanks, he begged if he might be so bold as to know where she lived. Thomas was informed, and his boldness was pardoned; and our hero with his eyes drowned in tears, followed his new friends.

The sky had now become thick, and the snow began to descend. Helen offered our hero a shawl which she wore under her great coat, to put over his head, which he took out of respect, but was indifferent as to its use. He felt the pleasant sensation of gratitude for the offer, and wrapped it round his neck. 'Twas the kindness of the gift that warmed his heart more than the

gift itself, and Helen, from that moment, was the elected of his infant affections. On turning the lane, Ned took a last view of the barn; Thomas was looking after them, and Ned's tears flowed afresh at the sight. Yet he was not dispirited; he answered with a cheerful voice to any questions that were put to him, though his tears streamed down his face as he spoke.—Was he unhappy? "No." What did he cry for? "He did not know." They passed his mother's grave, that stood distinguished by its green turf, while all around was white with snow. Ned almost avoided glancing at it, lest he should be trespassing too much on their attention; he thereby relieved their feelings as well as his own. There was a delicacy in this conduct that did not escape the notice of Mrs. Mordent. She began to ruminate in her own mind how best to prefer his suit to Mr.

Mordent, who had a kind of antipathy to adventurers of every description. Ned continued to paddle along with his naked feet, while the snow drifted unheeded in his weather beaten face; he tapped Fido on the head, who began to be on good terms with him, and frisked round him with joy, as though he were conscious of having gained a friend. Ned gradually resumed his cheerfulness, and the continued attention of his little friends, by degrees, relieved him from reflection.

Arrived at the inn—Mrs. Mordent directed Ned into the kitchen and ordered him a comfortable breakfast; she called one of the maid servants, that had a prepossessing countenance, and commissioned her to get him comfortably and tidily accoutred. She accordingly accompanied him to a clothier's, and Ned was immediately equipt. Mrs. Mordent enjoining silence in the maid, retired to prepare for breakfast.

CHAPTER II.

Our family party met at breakfast about half-past ten o'clock; Mr. Mordent not being up when our travellers had returned. Coffee was poured out. Helen and Mary sat in silent expectation for their mother to begin the subject.---Mr. Mordent appeared fretful and impatient; owing probably to the extra glass he had taken the night before.—The coffee was too hard dried; he would take tea.—Tea was poured out.—It was too weak.---More tea was

put in. He then had faults to find with the water, the toast, &c.—"Why did not the waiter remain in the room?"—'You have just ordered him out my dear.'—The bell was rung, and the waiter appeared.—"What did you please to want?"—Mrs. Mordent's eye directed his attention to Mr. Mordent. Mr. Mordent was obliged to consider.---"What o'clock was it?" The waiter led his eye to the clock in the room; 'Near eleven, sir.'---"Does it snow now?"---The waiter looked at the window. 'Very fast, sir.'---Mr. Mordent was foiled, and remained silent.---What a tyrant is man! He cannot sit down to take a meal but the four corners of the world are ransacked to appease his appetite. The despot of a family would be the despot of a nation. His word is law, and his eye the signal of action. He speaks, "serenely slothful," from his little throne of power,

and the satellites of his influence move in silent obedience.

Mrs. Mordent poured out another cup of tea, which she seasoned with *French cream,* to use a trite epithet. Mr. Mordent gulped it down, and his muscles relaxed from the expression of anger; the rough tones of his voice softened by its power, and his eye shot a more conciliating beam. Another cup was poured out, and Mrs.. Mordent made a few introductory observations. The expence of servants, and their impertinence, were glanced at; *boys* were frequently more tractable than men, and more attentive, because men considered themselves superior to many offices in which they were employed. William (their man servant) was about being married. She had met with a boy, who, with a few instructions from him before he went, would do all his work.

"Who will give him a character? said Mr. Mordent.

"His countenance," Mrs. Mordent was going to say, but she checked herself. She had been satisfied as to his character.

Where was he?

The bell was rung and our hero ordered to appear.

Mr. Mordent's eye glanced hastily, but severely over his figure; the kitchen fire had brought the blood in his cheek —his new clothes had greatly improved his appearance, and he encountered the gaze of scrutiny without guilt, and therefore without embarrassment.

Mr. Mordent asked him a variety of frivolous and foolish questions, to all of which Ned answered with a becoming humility and respect. Could he look after horses? "Yes." Weed

the garden? "Yes." Could he wait at table? Ned scratched his head. Mrs. Mordent particularized. Could he fetch a knife and fork? "Yes;" and Ned accordingly was going to fetch one, but was called back, and Mrs. Mordent explained. Mr. Mordent was half amused, but he could no longer put Ned out, for when he did not understand what he was asked, he replied that "*he could larn.*" Could he read and write? "No; he could larn." Could he go to market and defraud his master and mistress? "No; he could larn." Mr. Mordent laughed, but the eye of his wife reproached him with his folly.

What wages did he ask?

Ned did not want no wages but his vittel.

Ned was immediately engaged.

About twelve o'clock our party prepared to depart, and Ned was directed to ride behind the chaise. The "whip behind" warnings of the younkers, were no longer sounds of terror to our hero. Our travellers changed horses at Henley. Mrs. Mordent asked Ned if he were starved. "No," said Ned, while his teeth chattered in contradiction. The chaiseman damned him for a little lying devil, and bid him get into the house and warm himself. Ned took his advice. It was a stretch beyond Mr. Mordent's philanthropy to give him a better situation, and, the horses being in, Ned again *bundled up* behind.—They came to a hill of very steep ascent; the horses went very slow, and Ned thought, that, by relieving them and walking to the top, he should warm himself.—Ned and Fido trudged together up the hill. They were quickly assailed by half-a-dozen school boys

with snow balls. Fido kept them at bay, but on receiving one in his eyes, he proceeded to less equivocal hostilities than barking, and fastened his enemy by the skirts of his coat. The skirts gave way, and Fido bore the spoils of the contest in his mouth towards Ned. One of the most desperate now approached with a stick, threatening to exterminate their four-footed enemy for the assault. Fido wheeled into line of battle with his friend, and waited the attack. Ned broke the blow offered at his ally, and after a sharp wrestle remained master of the weapon. The roaring of the *spencered* youth for the skirts of his coat brought out a cottager, who advanced with a large stick and began to attack poor Ned, with the most unmerciful severity, who returned the assault on the cottager's shins. Fido fell upon their new enemy in the rear, and

would quickly have *undressed* him had he not immediately relinquished the contest. A parley was sounded, and Ned explained the cause of the quarrel.

The honour of the victory however did not much console Ned for the delay; for on looking forward he perceived that the chaise had reached the top of the hill, and had already resumed its pace. Ned ran himself almost blind but to no purpose: he lost ground till the carriage got gradually out of sight; Fido ran on before him by way of encouragement, but, his strength exhausted, our hero was obliged to yield. They continued however to jog onwards, while Fido took the lead, as though he recommended himself as a guide. Ned seemed to understand him, and cheerfully pursued the way.

On the arrival of our travellers at Chankley House they were welcomed home by the servants, but were not a little surprized and unhappy on discovering our hero's absence. Mrs. Mordent reproached herself for not having been more importunate in recommending him to be taken into the chaise, though it was a dread of her officiousness producing a change of sentiment in Mr. Mordent that had prevented her. Fido was likewise quickly discovered to be absent, and this circumstance gave birth to new hopes that he might not be far off. The snow for the last three or four miles had fallen remarkably heavy. William was asked if he dare take a horse and go in his pursuit? William scratched his head, which was a kind of an oblique negative, and Mr. Mordent said that there were houses on the road and he was in no danger. Night was setting in with

unusual severity, and the chaiseman drove his horses to Birmingham, as he was afraid of the roads becoming impassable before he could reach home.

Supper time came and the wanderers had not arrived. No thought of the sufferings of another person affected the appetite of Mr. Mordent; he eat his supper and drank his glass; and was quickly asleep in his armed chair. Silence had spoken the anxiety and fears of Mrs. Mordent, and Helen and Mary had exhausted invention in devising the reasons of our hero's absence. They were suffered to sit up past their usual hour in expectation of his appearance; Fido was a faithful guide and knew the country for many miles round, but the night was unfavourable to their hopes.

Mrs. Mordent went into the kitchen; the servants were sitting round the fire discussing the "hair breadth 'scapes" of people who had been lost in the winter's nights, and lived under snow for weeks together. William was not satisfied in having hesitated in his duty, and endeavoured to make light of the matter. Two of the stout servant girls offered to go a little way on the road and make enquiries. William blushed at his inferiority but was forbid to accompany them. Mrs. Mordent praised their courage and promised to reward them whether they succeeded or not. One put on a pair of old boots and the other a pair of gaiters, and being well muffled in handkerchiefs and tippets, and warmed against the elements by an extra glass or two of old ale, offered to depart. The mastiff was let loose to go with them. Mrs. Mordent accompanied them to the door. The

snow fell in thick and heavy flakes; dark and impenetrable clouds seemed to enshroud the firmament. No moon was in the hemisphere, nor did the twinkling light of one friendly star steal through the gloom to cheer the benighted traveller. Our heroines with their lanthorn light, and tremendous guide, committed themselves to the elements, but were charged not to go beyond a certain point; there to make enquiries and offer a certain reward to any body who would undertake to go further.

Mrs. Mordent returned to the parlour. Mr. Mordent presently awoke, and finishing his bottle, without making any enquiries went to bed.—Helen and Mary were advised to do the same, but on petitioning to wait till the servants returned, Mrs. Mordent permitted them to remain.

Time told heavily his noticed space; the kitchen clock ticked slowly and audibly on, till it gave warning of eleven. The servants had not returned. The anxiety of Mrs. Mordent encreased —William entreated to go in pursuit of them. She hesitated in permitting him, and went to the door to listen. All was silent as death. Her fears began to prevail and she was on the point of ordering William to prepare when she thought she heard the sound of voices. The fallen snow prevented her seeing many yards from the door. She listened attentively and thought she perceived something moving at a distance. It was Jowler; she now perceived the light, and heard the sound of the servants voices. Hope arose in her breast, but like the midnight lightning of heaven, only to vanish and leave a darkness more profound. The servants with difficulty had explored

their way up the lane that led from the turnpike road, and could not prevail on any body to venture from their homes on such a night, but several promised to go in the morning. The morning, thought she! The morning shall come and the traveller shall stumble over his cold corpse; his unclosed eye shall appeal to heaven against the pride of earth. Oh! wretched son of a still more wretched parent!—She now sent her daughters to bed, giving them hopes of more success on the morrow, and recommending the servants to take care of themselves, repaired thither herself, commending the object of her anxiety to that Providence whose eye is never withdrawn from the needy and fatherless children of charity.

CHAPTER III.

It is now time that we return to our hero. As the night approached the fallen snow considerably impeded his progress. He however continued his way following the track and intimation of his friend Fido.—The labour kept him warm though the snow drifted in his face and clung to his breast, which ever and anon he brushed away. The ground became covered so thick that he could scarcely distinguish the road, had not now and then a horseman,

with terror-impelled pace, passed unheeding by, and left a faint track to guide his weary steps.

The dusky night thickened round him, and no house was visible to take the wanderer in. The hedges were covered with snow, and the road before him seemed but one white and wide extended plain.—Fido kept close to his steps as tho' impressed with the impending danger. — Darkness had spread her curtain round and no shelter reached his eye; his frequent stumbles convinced him that he had forsaken the road, and nothing visible could direct his route.—The labour of walking became extreme, and he was frequently obliged to stand still for rest and consideration.—His strength was exhausted, and the numbness of death seemed to be encroaching on his vitals. The dizziness of sleep came

suddenly over him, and he could scarce sustain himself; he patted Fido on the head as though he bade him farewell.—Fido licked his hand and began to bark. The noise of his friend startled him from his lethargy and gave him a strong impression of his danger. A new hope arose in his breast that the dog might be heard, and procure assistance. He made another effort but found his progress impeded by a small hedge. He with some difficulty got over. He appeared to be surrounded by bushes, and the depth of the snow now seemed to bar all further progress. Through the thickly falling element he now faintly distinguished something like a hay rick. The hope that such a sight, at such a moment, inspired, was lively and ardent. Unused to fear, and having been buffetted in vain by the rudest winds of fortune, Ned was not apt to shrink from situations; he had

trudged on in defiance of the pelting element, where the sickly children of effeminancy would have yielded to despair. Ned, after great exertions, and a variety of tumbles, gained the lee-side of the rick. He thrust his hands into the hay and nestled his form under its scanty shelter, and the warmth thereby imparted to his body revived his spirits and restored his alacrity. Doubtful whether any house was near, and fearful of running further hazard in exploring in search of one, he began to concert the means of more effectual shelter. With his hands he scraped away the snow from under his feet, which was a considerable depth, and in which, perceiving his intention, Fido began to assist him. Ned encouraged Fido to bark, that, if any body were within hearing, he might give the alarm. Ned joined his hallo, to the intelligent bark of his friend, but

the falling snow impeded the sound, and the faint and broken echoes died in feebleness away.

Ned now commenced a most laborious task; he began to pull the hay out of the rick with his hands, with the view of making an inlet in its side, and was pursuing his labour with most effectual perseverance, when the distant cry of a child startled him from his pursuit. Fido bristled up his attention, and elevating his ears, gave his voice again to the gale in separate periods, as though he listened between. Ned abandoned his purpose, and quieting his friend, darted immediately in direction of the sound. He concluded that he was either near some house, or that there were others near him in distress. He could therefore either give or receive succour.—After repeated falls he came to a small gate that ap-

peared to open into a garden. Ned could not open it owing to the depth of the snow; he scrambled over and saw a small cottage at a little distance. He scrawled, partly on his hands and knees, sometimes buried and sunk in the snow, and was quickly thundering at the door. The faint embers of a kitchen fire glimmered feebly through a small window; the gladful light seemed already to have reached the heart of our hero, and his breast was warmed with new hopes. Nobody however appeared to answer his knocks. He kicked and called, and called and kicked, but a deep and distressing silence succeeded. After a fruitless exertion of lungs and labour, he had recourse to other means. He tried the window;—it was strong and fastened on the inside. Hunger and his fears made him desperate. He broke a pane and the window was opened. He heaved Fido through and

was quickly after him. He lighted a candle which was in the kitchen corner, and throwing some clumps of wood on the fire, which appeared to be put by in considerable numbers for drying, began to shake off the snow from his clothes. The fire burned briskly and brightly up, and threw a cheering glow around. Our hero and his dog were almost roasted in its heat. Ned's thoughts now began to stray towards the pantry, but he was willing, if any body were in the house, first to gain permission. With this purpose he took the candle, and with a slow and gentle step, approached the stairs. He listened;—all was silent as death. He walked gently and fearfully up. On reaching the landing place, he threw a trembling glance across the apartment; it contained two beds, both of which appeared to be occupied. He called out, but nobody answered.

He repeated his call in a louder tone; —an obstinate silence followed.—Ned trembled with strange and indefinable fears. He approached the largest bed. A scanty curtain veiled it from his sight. He drew it aside, but shrunk almost from himself at the view. It contained a pale and meagre corpse that was laid out, in that stiff and death-like posture, in which it is customary to place them. The white, and newly unfolded linen in which it was laid, seemed to own how little it had been troubled by its pale occupier. While Ned was gazing on the corpse with that awful absorbsion of thought that such scenes inspire, his attention was arrested by a most terrific appearance; the bed clothes appeared to move. Ned shuddered ,and strained his eyes, as though willing to doubt it, as an illusion. The undulating motion was repeated too visibly, and Ned was on

the point of sinking to the ground with terror, when Fido made his appear-ance from under the bed, rubbing his back against the side as he came out. Ned recovered his self-possession.—Our hero now directed his attention to the other bed, in which were two sweet children sound asleep in each other's arms. Ned was unwilling to disturb their slumbers, and as there was no door that led to any other apartment, with a thougthful and silent step, that seemed to respect the dead, he returned to the kitchen fire.—Our hero, impel-led by hunger, now paid a visit to the pantry, which was tolerably furnished. He eat moderately and gave a share to Fido.—Overcame with fatigue he now reclined himself on the hearth and fell into a profound sleep.

Ned was awoke in the morning by the barking of Fido; he started up with

a confused impression of danger Two little naked children were squatted down by his side. Ned's thoughts rambled to the events of the preceding night. He soon recollected himself; tapped the little boy and girl on the head to remove their apprehensions, and quickly made up a good fire. He then took a peep out at the window. The snow was nearly on a level with the casement, and still kept falling. The door was barred up as though by a mountain which the wind had drifted against it, and he appeared hemmed in by the hand of fate. He directed his attention to the children, but could learn no further than that their "father was gone out, and their mother was gone dead."—Ned ruminated on the dangers of the night; the fate that probably awaited and had overtaken their only parent. He encouraged the little urchins by kind words; helped them

to dress themselves and prepared them a breakfast. The house, without any unnecessary ornaments, was neatly furnished, and provided with good wholesome food, equally removed from meanness and superfluity. The day was spent in Ned's amusing the little motherless, and, perhaps, fatherless urchins. His mind would frequently stray to the silent and lifeless figure above, and to the friends from whom fate had so rudely separated him.--As night approached Ned began to feel the loneliness of his present situation. At an early hour our three younkers all went to bed together, and care and terror were soon forgotten in sleep.

Three days passed over the head of our hero in a similar manner, during which, at different periods, the snow had continued to fall in great abundance, and had nearly barricaded the

windows. On the fourth day a thaw opened its sluices on our little fortress; the kitchen became inundated, and Ned was obliged to make a fire up stairs, whither he removed his little family. The sky became clear, and the sun shone faintly over the white landscape before the chamber window, through which Ned had frequently thrown a longing eye.—Night came on, and the last fuel was put on the fire; the remains of a pale rushlight glimmered in the socket, and Ned, to divert his thoughts, played and chattered with the children till rather a late hour. The rushlight had sometime been gone out, and the embers were becoming dull, when the bark of Fido gave an alarm. Ned listened, and heard confused sounds out of doors and saw the glimmering of a light through the window. The sounds now increased and he presently heard the door burst open

and the paddling of feet in the water below. A voice in suppressed agony exclaimed "*they are drowned!*" Ned held the children fast by the hands and was going to the top of the stairs when the light gleamed on the landing place. A man immediately appeared, and entering the room glanced fearfully and rapidly round the apartment. The feelings of a parent overcame all others and he clasped his children to his breast, and drowned them with kisses. His eye then hung over the pale corpse of his wife; he thought of her past anxiety for her offspring, and her present unconsciousness struck more forcibly on his soul.—Several others now appeared in the room and they all began to surround our hero. Ned told his "round unvarnished tale," and was loaded with thanks and with praises. They shook him a hundred times by the hand, called him a "noble lad," tap-

ped Fido on the head and praised his courage and fidelity. Ned was now taken back by two of his new friends to a neighbouring public house. The snow was so deep that he was obliged to be carried the greatest part of the way. He supped with the landlord and landlady who paid him unusual distinctions; and Fido had as good a supper as a dog could wish. On being questioned however Ned could give but a poor account of himself. "He'd had no father nor mother; came from Thomas's barn, and could not tell where he was going." This did not affect the hospitality of his admirers, and in the morning a subscription was made for him, and his pockets were filled with money. Desiring to be put in the turnpike road, for he and the dog could find their way, he was accompanied by the cottager, whose children he had saved, and a number

of villagers who had heard the tale, a considerable way on his road.—Ned and his friend being left to themselves trudged forward with great alacrity. Owing to being detained so late in the day, evening came on before they had reached their journey's end.--The night was setting in with rain; a shrewd western wind blew coldly against his breast, and the late thaw had nearly inundated the road. The shawl given him by Ellen he had taken so much care of as not to have used; he now however wrapped it round his neck and with the intrepid eye of courage and the firm step of strength, met the driving rain.—The darkness of night was thickening fast around him when Fido, directing his eye to Ned, turned abruptly up a lane.—Ned followed him. He quickly found himself at a large pair of gates, where Fido, frisking his tail, made a sudden stop.—Ned opened the gates.

CHAPTER IV.

At Chankley House no means had been left untried to discover our lost hero. The progress of enquiry however had been considerably retarded by the severity of the weather, but when the fifth day was closing in on their hopes, and no traces had been discovered of his existence, a melancholy silence was observed on the subject.

Candles had just been lit in the parlour where Mrs. Mordent and her

daughters had sat in unusual silence, to which the increasing darkness seemed to be congenial, when Mr. Mordent made his entrance, and proposed an advertisement to recover their hero. Suddenly the well known bark of Fido awaked all their attention. They crowded to the door and our hero was escorted into the parlour by every person in the family; so great an object of curiosity had he become.

After taking some refreshment and being made dry and comfortable, he proceeded to give his adventures in detail. The coarse and unchastised language in which he delivered himself, the correct modulations of his voice, his intelligent and spontaneous manners, changing and corresponding with the course of events, together with the novelty of the circumstances, gave an irresistible interest to the recital. Mr.

Mordent himself was amused, and interrupted him with several whimsical inquires and comments, at which, as they appeared the smartest to himself, he was the loudest laugher. Mrs. Mordent derived a delight of a different kind; she discovered in his conduct traces of the most difficult virtues, and looked forward with a romantic delight to the task of forming a mind so susceptible of action, and which, at so early a period, could begin to think and act for itself. Wonder and delight occupied the infant minds of Helen and Mary, who, on the conclusion of the narrative, remained silent and thoughtful, looking alternately at Ned, and his companion Fido, who had couched his form before the fire.

Mr. Mordent now ordered Ned into the kitchen, desiring him to appear before him in the morning for further

directions. Ned was not sorry to escape the imperious eye of his proud employer; there was no kindness in his voice, but one uniform brief and half-articulated tone, seemed as tho' it censured itself for the time it wasted on one so contemptible. Ned felt that he was despised, and whether justly, or unjustly, it is an unpleasant sensation; it served however only to endear the conciliating manners of Mrs. Mordent and her daughters.—In the kitchen Ned felt himself more *at home;* he was stowed up in the corner, and called upon by every principle of good nature to gratify the curiosity of the kind-hearted servant girls. Ned retold his tale with increased glee, and was plied with sweet praises and strong ale, which, together with the kitchen fire, imparted a warmth to his fancy; he became more loud and eloquent; his vulgar language and impassioned

tones gave his adventures a contour of the ridiculous which was highly relished by his gaping congregation. Ned felt his fortune improving; the sensations of praise and encouragement were as delightful as they were new to his heart: he was become an object of interest, had a home, and, if he had one desire stronger than another, it was to deserve his present happiness. He slept, for the first time in his life, in a comfortable bed, free from care and alarm; and sweet and sound was his sleep.

There is an epicurism of mind as well as an epicurism of body; both have appetites,—become hungry, and are appeased, by similar means, tho' with dissimilar food. I wrote the above sentence to give a certain colouring of understanding to what follows. Modern philosophy is nothing but a

fastidiousness of mind, which, having run the gauntlet of common indulgences, with too much precipitancy, as *Johnson* would have said, to make any correct estimation, condemn the whole round of human enjoyments in *the lump,* and "determine against that which they know, because there may be something which they know not." A modern philosopher is a man who *piddles** over his mental food; as tho' he despised receiving any enjoyment by means that were common to the human race. A man with a weak mind, half cultivated, makes a good modern philosopher; or rather serves as a fair specimen of that effeminate sensitiveness which characterizes the sect. There is not one word in the English language which has been more refined upon by

* *Piddle,* to pick at table, to eat nicely.——*Ash.*
To eat squeamishly.——*Johnson.*

these two-legged caterpillars,† than the word *independence.* Some of our Lexicographers have called it *exemption from controul.* As this however is a state not to be acquired, it perhaps would have been better to call it *rational controul.* Our modern philosophers must have the credit of going as far as is practicable to *exempt* themselves from all earthly *controul;* so far as to be more under the controul of the *moon* than the planet on which nature placed them. They have therefore by some been properly called *lunatics;* by others *balloon men;* that is, they would ride as far above the surface of this vulgar world as the atmosphere would allow them. The earth however, as though to punish her presumptuous and unnatural sons,

† Caterpillar (*S.* of *uncertain derivation*), a fly in its REPTILE STATE.—*Ash.*

with an *affection* that proves her power of *controul,* as well as her *maternal care,* has often brought them back with a dangerous speed, to their proper home. I have not time to run down any more similes, or I would send them to sea without anchor or compass; but enough has been said. Who would abandon the sweet controul of the human affections, for the solitary and imperial misery of a recluse? The silken ties of love, and the trembling chords of sympathy, are as necessary as they are delightful to our nature. A man must, in part, become a brute before a wild, ferocious and tiger-like liberty is acceptable to him.

Ned arose in the morning *a servant;* which would sound in some people's ears as *a slave.* Let us not quarrel about words; we are all *slaves* to something; and perhaps it is less dangerous

to be slaves to other people's passions than our own. Obligation between master and servant is reciprocal; if it be greater on one side than the other, it is commonly on the side of the employer rather than the employed.

Ned felt the difference betwixt his present situation and his past, and was grateful. His alacrity to render himself serviceable could not fail to please; his eye continually wandered in search of employment, and anticipated his services on the slightest intimation. He received a kind of general direction from Mr. Mordent, and went about his duty with zeal and with cheerfulness.

Mr. Mordent, with a very handsome property, had few desires that strayed beyond common indulgences. He was partial to the company of his old com-

petitors in business, whom he could now meet without reflections of rivalry. He had a small sitting room that he set apart for such company, where he smoked his pipe and discussed the business of other times. Mrs. Mordent and her daughters commonly sat in a neat back parlour, and amused themselves alternately by reading, music, and conversation, with no other rule of choice than present inclinations. It was proposed by Mrs. Mordent that Ned, certain evenings every week, should be taught to read and write. This was cheerfully assented to by Helen and Mary, and all their old rudiment books were rummaged up for their new pupil. Ned, on such evenings, would *smarten* himself up, as he called it, as far as his notions of smartness carried him; that is, he made himself remarkably clean, burnished up his shoes, fastened up his stockings with

unusual tightness, and combed his hair formally and smoothly over his forehead. Ned proved what is called an *apt* scholar; he felt his improvement as a new source of pleasure, and seldom retired to the kitchen corner for the evening without some little story to read. He began to write. Helen mended his pens, set him copies, and excited his attention by praise; he was too happy in the possession of such friends, and too much satisfied with himself, to relax into remissness. He soon learnt enough to render his further progress somewhat dependant on himself. Knowledge, as has been said, is like fire, which must be kindled first by some external agent, but will afterwards propagate itself.

As a small drawback on Ned's present comforts, he had an obstinate habit of acting from his own feelings of

right and wrong, which did not, in many instances, square with his duties as a good servant, in the understanding of Mr. Mordent.

Mr. Mordent and his family one day paid a visit to their neighbour Mr. Pelham. Pelham House was what is called in the country a *little mile* from Charkley House.* Its occupier was a bachelor who had turned his fiftieth year, of severe, and, generally, unsocial manners. Among worldly people shrewd and cunning as the world; among children, a child. He had resided at Pelham House little better than four years; the house was formerly the residence of an only brother, now deceased. He visited nobody except the family of Mr. Mordent. He was pleased

* Erroneously spelt Cha*n*kley in the former sheets.

with the manners of Mrs. Mordent, and extremely partial to her children; he had with him at present the two sons of a distant relation, severally entitled Master George and Master Frederic Maurice, whom he had invited to spend the winter holidays with him. The present visit was occasioned by their speedy departure for school.

Mrs. Mordent had left word for William to bring the lantern at 10 o'clock for their return. The weather had been uncertain during the day, and the night set in with cold and sleety showers. At 10 o'clock it had changed to rain, which beat hard against the windows. The wind whistled round the turrets a hollow and melancholy sound. William thought they would not return on such a night as that, and said he would wait till it cleared up a little at least before he went. The ser-

vant-girls argued to the contrary, and prepared the lantern and umbrellas. William went to ask a neighbouring farmer's servant, who lived just across the lane, if he would go with him. The rain increased and William did not return. At half-past 10 o'clock, Ned and one of the servant girls set out in a heavy shower, with a load of great coats, &c. Ned carried the lantern and kept talking aloud to his companion, with a view to render himself cheerful company. The servant girl was very partial to Ned, and told him that he would be sure to have William's place, for he was a nice lad and she'd speak up for him. That William was a bad man, and so he'd turn out in the end, for he had got money off a girl with pretence to take a house and marry her, and she believed he never intended to do any thing of the kind. With such like chat they beguiled their

road and at length arrived in safety at Mr. Pelham's. While they were drying themselves in the kitchen, Mrs. Mordent came in. She was told the reason of their coming instead of William, but said little in reply: soon after eleven the rain abated and our visitors prepared to depart. The Master Maurices, who had been playing at cards with the Miss Mordents, would go a little way with them on the road. Master George, who was two years the eldest, took Helen, and Frederic Mary; directing Ned to walk before them with the lantern. The servant with another lantern, and Mr. and Mrs. Mordent, followed behind. The road, which lay principally through the grounds belonging to Charkley and Pelham Houses, was very clean, considering the weather. On having to cross a lane, however, that intersected their road, they found the water very deep. Mas-

ter George told Helen to spring over; Helen refused. He pulled as though to compel her, and she insisted on going further round. On his being resolute, she called on Ned to help her, who with some difficulty had refrained from kicking up Master Maurice's heels. Her appeal to Ned rather nettled the young gentleman, and he became more obstinate, and persisted in her jumping over. Ned went up to him and shook his head at him, indicating something else if he did not abandon his purpose. This only enraged him, and he grasped Helen's arm and told her to follow him. Helen resisted, but Master Maurice was the strongest. Ned's ire was roused; he'd no other other way of saving her, and he knocked Master Maurice down. The blood streamed from his nose, and he set up a most lamentable roar, as he lay in the dirt, without offering to get up.

His brother began to kick and beat Ned, who did not attempt to resent it, for he was aware he had gone too far. Mr. Mordent came up and was for exterminating Ned upon the spot. As they were not above two hundred yards from Mr. Pelham's, they all went back to see how far the young gentleman was hurt. Ned was ordered under arrest in the care of the servant girl, and his punishment was only deferred that it might be more complete. Mrs. Mordent was grieved, but said nothing, and Helen followed the victim of her obstinacy in tears. On their return, after a deal of *fuss* in making the little gentleman clean, and stopping the blood, Ned received a summons to the parlour; the servant had gone in before him with the *horsewhip*. The girl shook him kindly by the hand, and told him to *never mind*, for Madam would not let him be hurt. Ned how-

ever had few hopes and bent his way towards the parlour. In the passage he met Helen; her eyes were red with weeping. She took his hand; her tears flowed afresh, and she could not speak. Ned endeavoured to look cheerful, and said "he did not mind a bit of flogging," She led him into the parlour. The young gentlemen were formally seated at one end of the room, as though they expected much gratification from the trial. Mr. Pelham was sitting on the sopha; he had not seen Ned before, and the moment he bent his eye upon him his anger disappeared. He had received some account of him from Mrs. Mordent. Though Ned's eye sought the ground, there were no particular traces of penitence in his countenance. He looked as though he had made up his mind to be flogged and was willing to dispense with all previous ceremony. Mr. Mordent

had the whip in his hand, which he was flourishing about in a kind of overture to the flagellation that was to follow. Silence being enjoined in the younger parties, Mr. Pelham proceeded to examination with more severity in his manners than his mind.

Was he sorry for what he had done?

(Ned looked at Helen, who stood a little on one side of him.)

"No."

His eyes again sought the ground. Mr. Mordent smacked the whip, and called him an obstinate and wicked young dog.

Not sorry! did he owe Master Maurice any ill-will?

Not before; but he should not have pulled Miss through the water.

Did he think of hurting the young gentleman when he struck him?

He thought of Miss being in the water.

Did he expect to be beaten for what he had done?

Yes.

Did not he think he deserved it?

Yes, he supposed so.

Ought he not then to be sorry, if he had done any thing that deserved punishment?

Yes.

And he was not sorry?

No.

Would he rather ask Master Maurice's pardon, or be flogged?

(Ned's eye strayed again towards Helen.)

He'd rather be flogged.

Could not he have relieved Miss Mordent without knocking down her companion?

He did not want to hurt nobody, but he was afraid Miss would be in the water.

Mr. Pelham ordered that they should shake hands, and the circumstance should be overlooked. Ned immediately held out his hand to his opponent and said that he was sorry that he hurt him. Master Maurice with a sulky reluctance complied. Frederic went goodnaturedly up to Ned and took his hand, and begged pardon for kicking him.

Why did *he* kick him? asked Mr. Pelham.

For beating his brother.

Did not Ned beat him again?

No.

Mr. Pelham asked Ned how he came to overlook the conduct of Frederic, when he had been so easily provoked by his brother?

He did not mind for himself, and Frederic was a *little'n.*

You are a brave fellow, after all, said Mr. Pelham, and he shook Ned by the hand. Mrs. Mordent was highly pleased, though she was not surprized at the decision of Mr. Pelham. Helen and Mary were more gratified than they scarce dare to appear. Mr. Mordent was the only person dissatisfied, for he had been disappointed in not exercising the whip over poor Ned's shoulders, and said he would do it when he got home if he did not go down on his knees and beg the young gentleman's pardon. Mr. Pelham interfered, and he with some difficulty was constrained to abandon his purpose.

The weather had new entirely cleared up and our visitors departed. On their arrival at home, William made an awkward apology for his absence. He was

ordered to appear in the morning. He expected his discharge, and, during the night, evil thoughts had taken possession of his mind. In the morning William received orders to leave at the end of a month. He had no situation in view, and had talked about being married only with a view to defraud an industrious girl of her savings, and get his wages raised. He became morose with the other servants, and was frequently silent and thoughtful, as though he were ruminating on some dark project. Ned had a vague idea that William had some mischief in his mind, and was suspicious and watchful of him, from no other motive than a curiosity which he could not resist.

He one day petitioned Mrs. Mordent for leave to go to Birmingham after a place, which was granted. He asked Ned to sit up for him, as per-

haps it might be late before he returned. Ned gave his promise.

At half-past eleven o'clock William had not returned. The family were all asleep. Ned opened the door to listen if he could hear him coming, and saw him in the avenue with another man. When he saw Ned he came in and told him to go to bed; that he was only talking with an acquaintance and should immediately follow him. There was something hurried and embarrassed in his manner, which gave Ned the alarm; a hideous expression in his countenance that had a powerful effect on Ned's mind. He took a candle and pretended to go to bed. When he had reached his room, from an interest he could not conquer, he put out the candle, and leaving his shoes, walked quietly down to the first landing-place to listen. He could hear

them talking in an under tone in the kitchen, but could catch no sounds that he understood. After the clock struck twelve he ventured a little further down. He heard them more distinctly. William mentioned a "bureau," and said something about "the old one done with, every thing else was easy." Ned was frightened and knew not what to do. He went up to the door of the chamber where Mr. and Mrs. Mordent slept; he gently opened it and looked in; they appeared to be in a sound sleep. He hesitated to awake them because he was not *certain* that any thing was wrong. The bed was betwixt him and the windows; a rising moon threw a faint and doubtful light across the chamber. He walked quietly in. There was a "bureau" in the room between the windows. Ned became more confirmed in his suspicions. He wished to hide himself and

watch, but saw no place that was favourable. He went to the door to listen, and heard the sound of their feet. Scarce knowing what he did he got on a table, and from thence on the top of a bookcase. It was in the shade of the curtains and very near the side of the bed. He couched down his form as close as he could and waited in silent suspence. He waited till the clock had struck one, and heard no more. He began to hope that William was gone to bed. Two o'clock came and every thing was silent. His fears began to subside. He was afraid of getting down lest he should make a noise. His eyes became heavy, and, in this situation he fell asleep. His dreams were frightful, for they were of William. He thought he was pinioned to the floor, and that William stood over him with a naked sword. He awoke with the agony, and recollection

rushed on his mind. He heard somebody in the room; a man appeared to be standing under him: he was drawing the curtains of the bed. As the shade was removed the moon beam lit upon a drawn sabre. It was lifted to strike, and came in contact with his situation. From an involuntary impulse he laid hold of it. The murderer fell to the ground with terror, and the sword was left in his hand. Ned called loudly out, and Mr. Mordent jumped up in his bed. The noise restored William to his recollection, and he got up and stole out of the room. Mrs. Mordent in a stupor between being asleep and awake, uttered a dreadful scream. Mr. Mordent arose; he saw a man steal through the gloom of the chamber and heard him run down stairs, and found Ned on the top of the bookcase with a sword in his hand! Ned jumped from his watch-

tower and told him that he had liked to have been killed, and that William was robbing the house. Mr. Mordent scarce knew whom to suspect, and rang his bell violently.

In the interval Ned further particularized, but was scarcely attended to. The other servants shortly appeared, in scarce less terror than their master, at such an unusual alarm. All was fear and suspicion in the breast of Mr. Mordent. He, however, with the sword he had taken from Ned, summoned resolution to go down with the servants into the kitchen: Ned led the way. A servant was left with Mrs. Mordent; she immediately arose and joined the party. A neighbouring farmer was called up, and a general search was made, but without their being able to ascertain what immediately was missing.

The robbers however had fled and left no trace by which they might be pursued.

It was supposed that the property in Mr. Mordent's room was their principal object; to effect the possession of which, they had determined on the murder of Mr. Mordent. Ned's terrific interference prevented the murder and the robbery.

Nobody knew any thing of the affair but our intrepid hero, who was asked a thousand questions. The account that he gave was so miraculous, that Mr. Mordent could scarce give it credit. Mrs. Mordent and the servants did him more justice; they all appeared to have been saved by the guardian care of a child, whose courage excited their surprize, and most unbounded admiration. His tale was so

simple and so consistent, that Mr. Mordent was compelled at length to admit it in its fullest force. He owed his life to a friendless beggar boy, to whom, a few hours before, he could scarce condescend to speak without a feeling of self-contempt. Being indisposed for sleep, the whole of our party sat up till day light, when the customary means were taken for apprehending the villains who had escaped. Mr. Mordent rode over to the neighbouring town, and a particular description of William was printed in the public papers, &c. offering a reward of *One hundred guineas*. The sword which had been taken was described, and the affair was made as public as possible.

Ned went about his work immediately after, as though he had done nothing more than his duty. His exploits

however were proclaimed, with no *abatement* of their miraculous nature; His former adventures were added, with a thousand exaggerations, to the present enterprize, and he became a common topic of conversation.

All endeavours to apprehend William and his accomplice, were ineffectual; and time, against which, there is nothing in man or his works that can withstand, considerably weakened the impression of the event on the mind of Mr. Mordent.

Mr. Pelham, an evening soon after, met Ned by himself. He stopt and spoke to him, and asked him a variety of questions, merely for the sake of hearing his answers, which were always strikingly correct in their sense, but frequently as ridiculous in their style of expression. He spoke to him of his

parents; Ned felt the solitude of an orphan, and only answered with his tears. Mr. Pelham was moved. He put a trifle in Ned's hand, and told him that he should never want a friend as long as he deserved one. Ned repeated the sentence in his own mind. He was "poor in thanks," but he thanked him.—He bent his way home, rather sad in spirits; a melancholy recollection of the past hung like a cloud over his mind, and he gave way to vague and gloomy rumination. He entered a back avenue that led to the house, with a slow and thoughtful pace. He presently discovered Helen at a distance. She was learning her French When she saw him, she came up and spoke to him with all that kindness and frankness which benevolence and innocence inspire. Ned's state of mind was more than usually susceptible. His trembling voice and wandering eye, denoted the agitation of his feelings.

Are you unhappy Ned? asked Helen.

No, Miss.

I am sure, Ned, if you want any thing, and will tell me, Ned, I can get it for you.

I don't want any thing, Miss; every body's so good to me that I've got more than I want.

I know my father is not so kind to you, Ned, as he ought,* but my mother, and sister, and Mr. Pelham, and I, *all* love you.

There was a kindness in the tones of Helen's voice that made its way to poor Ned's heart. His former life had been

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* Some of the sticklers for rank and discipline will perhaps, object to this sentence in the mouth of a daughter. I can only say, that, if it be proper for children to have a sense of right and wrong, it is proper for them to express it. This subject will again come under the reader's notice.

a life of toil and hardships; he had been beat and bruised, kicked and buffeted about, without feeling or ceremony. He had been accustomed to receive the directions of his labours with accompaniments that were intended to enforce them; and whether his services were well or ill performed, they seldom received one token of satisfaction, or one smile of thanks. His tears found the way to his eyes, at this fresh assurance of such friendships, but he brushed them away with a feeling of shame. Helen took his hand, and with an innocent ingenuousness told him that she was sure he was not happy, and that it was unkind of him not to tell her what he grieved for. There is a kind of sentiment in the hand that is intelligible; a species of electric intellect that holds communion with the heart. Even on the infant mind and constitution of Ned, it had a certain

vague and thrilling effect; it conveyed to his heart an assurance of the purest good will. They approached the house; Helen shook him gently by the hand as she left him, and told him, in the kindness and innocence of her heart, that, *whoever else deserted him, she would be his friend as long as she lived.* Helen proceeded, but with a dissipated attention, to her task; and Ned, with a heart that beat light with innocence and encouragement, went about his duty.

CHAPTER V.

IN the bosom of peace and comfort; with a softened recollection of the past, and the most encouraging hopes of the future, the wings of time took their gentlest and most imperceptible flight over the head of our hero. He was treated as one of the family; and the cares and anxieties of our little community were strongly excited on all occasions that affected the interest of its infant protector. A few of the irregularities of Mr. Mordent's temper might however have been excepted, but even these were not without their wholesome effects on the general economy.

Ned made a rapid progress in his studies;—a consciousness of improvement is a reward of past labour, and an encouragement to future exertion. There is no course of instruction so easy and so rapid as *observation*; it lays all persons, places and events under contribution, and is continually holding up, as 'twere in the "mirror of nature," new stimulants to good, or warnings of evil. Ned possessed this talent in a peculiar degree; he soon became a kind of competitor of his young female friends; it was an inexpressible delight to study *along side* of them, if the expression may be pardoned, they were so gentle, so willing to give and receive assistance. He bustled through the work of the day with an alacrity that acknowledged no limits; his mind was bent on other things, and his arm encountered the labour of service, not *as his pursuit*, but its *obstacle*. He had

acquired a habit of rumination; the light and wandering fancies of his infant mind, strayed beyond the narrow precincts of animal existence; he aspired, in vague and child-like flights, to the love and esteem of the wise and the good; he took the only means of attainment, viz. to deserve the honors to which he aspired.

Mrs. Mordent observed, with unspeakable satisfaction, the general propriety of his conduct. He never performed a noble and generous action without receiving, in some shape or other, a token of acknowledgement and approbation.

With a head full of the wild vagaries of fancy, and a heart light with innocence; his time equally divided by study, labour and recreation; playful in his labour, and laborious in his

play—Ned told the slightly varying round of his "boyish days." Time confirmed the predictions of his childhood; he arose rapidly to the stature of manhood, and his mind and manners improved with his form.

Among other circumstances that Ned had treasured in his memory, was his birth-day; which was remarkable, for it was on the *first of May;* a morning of gladness, in the season of promise. It was known to Mrs. Mordent. On the night preceding the day that completed his seventeenth year, it came afresh on his mind, with mixed reflections of the pleasant and the melancholy. For the last three or four days he appeared to have had less familiar communication with the family than was usual; he thought himself more insulated from their attention, and the solitariness of his fate stole

upon his spirits; and he sunk into a stupor of gloomy rumination. He was sitting by the kitchen fire with his eye "bent on vacancy," and had given loose to a free indulgence of his feelings, when he received a summons to the back parlour. The name of the *back parlour* awoke his gratitude, and called all his sympathies into action. With a trembling frame, and a thousand hopes and anxieties flitting across his mind, he prepared to obey the summons. On his entrance, Mrs. Mordent was sitting in her armed chair, from whence she had so often dealt out to our hero, with no sparing hand, instruction and encouragement. Mary was at work at a piece of embroidering, and Helen was copying a head from Lavater. Mrs. Mordent requested him to be seated. The kindness of her voice restored our hero somewhat to himself. Mary drew her chair nearer

to her mother's, making room for him to sit down betwixt Helen and herself. Helen altered the position of the table, so as to avoid sitting with her back towards him. Ned, reassured by these marks of kindness and attention, took his place.

I have sent for you Ned, said Mrs. Mordent, to inform you of the result of a conversation I have had with Mr. Mordent concerning you. I know not whether I shall be able to make my motives appear to you exactly in the light in which they appear to myself, but if there be any part of my conduct with which you are not satisfied, and which is in itself wrong, it must have originated in an error of judgement; on such points therefore, when you have duly considered the subject, I shall solicit and challenge the avowal of your opinions. The service in

which you have been employed, Ned, is unworthy of you; it is far, very far below your claims, and the power and energies of your mind. We have therefore absolved you from the disgusting drudgery of servitude; we dismiss you as a servant, yet are desirous of retaining your *services*; we invite your residence with us, as a friend and a companion, as long as it may be pleasant and agreeable; or till you may fix upon some engagement or pursuit, by which society may reap the benefit of those services you are capable of performing. In the intervals of labour, that are commonly devoted to indolence, or dissipation, you have attained a degree of knowledge that is not frequent among youths of your age, even with all the advantages of time and tutorship. What others have not learnt as a business, you have acquired as a recreation. Yet there

are not wanting, people, who will even censure such an employment of time as yours; but censure is useless, and praise itself is idle. The satisfaction of your own mind is the best criterion of your merit. To-morrow is your birth-day, when you will begin a new course of life; a life more suitable to your taste, and more worthy of your talents. The obligations, which, as a family, we are under to you, are of a nature that admit not of an adequate return; you will not therefore deny us the pleasure and the privilege of rendering you such feeble services as are in our power; this we claim as a justice. But more of this hereafter. You have it in your power, as a friend, to confer on us a particular favor, which I shall point out to you at some future time. I have nothing to apprehend from the confidence I shall repose in you; I have too intimate an

acquaintance with your character to be deceived. Propriety, in you, has always been a matter of feeling and sentiment, rather than thought or duty. I know the points where you will be most in danger; but your danger will be your safety, for the sentiment which it will inspire will preserve you. And, now, as on all occasions like the present, what is said immediately, is rather what we feel than what we think, I shall lay an interdict on the subject for seven days, and pronounce an absolute prohibition on all remark, direct, oblique, or collateral. You will take your supper with *us* to night; the servants are informed of my determination, and another man will supply your place to-morrow.

Mrs. Mordent now rang the bell and ordered supper, requesting Ned to give his opinion of the head which

Helen had been copying. The variety of sensations, that mixed and melted in his mind; the difference in his feelings and circumstances, wrought in so short a time, scarce left our hero presence of mind to undertake any thing with composure. He however promised obedience to the command of silence. Helen offered Ned the copy for inspection; her hand trembled with its charge, and she turned over several plates of Lavater to conceal her emotion. Ned as a friend, and as a servant, appeared to be two distinct beings. In speaking to him as a servant, her mind was calm and placid, and her feelings glided smoothly and securely in the channel of benevolence. She expressed her wishes without reserve or embarrassment; for to converse with him was a gentle and reproachless delight. Now, what before had flown spontaneously from the be-

neficence of her heart, appeared to be required as a right. Ned was become less interesting but more formidable.

On a slight view of her task, Ned pronounced it a good drawing, but a bad copy; very inferior to most of her others. Helen blushed. Law! Helen, said Mary, I am sure Ned is right, for you have scarce looked once at the original since you began the head. Helen's emotion increased.—Ned praised the spirit and expression of the face. Mrs. Mordent examined the drawing and observed, that she should be glad to see a collection of faces drawn from her fancy.

Supper came in and the evening was spent, in the sweet and rational converse of feeling, and reciprocity of sentiment. Mr. Mordent being at his club of neighbouring convivials,

returned not till rather a late hour.

The next morning arose in all the beauty of spring. Ned left his bed at an early hour and walked into the fields. The sun shone with a mild and gentle warmth; the grateful birds, as they basked in his morning beams, chaunted forth his praise. Not to partake of the gladness of nature at such an hour, is to be unhappy, or insensible in the extreme. Our hero felt the sun beams warm on his breast; his heart beat a more lively pulse, and alternately swelled with the ardor of hope, and sunk in the languor of sympathy. In the gay and delightful visions of youth and innocence, with all the distant pleasures of life dancing in his imagination, he wandered as fancy or chance might determine, till reflection reminded him of *time*. As he bent his way homewards he met Helen and Mary, arm in arm, who came out in

search of him. They were dressed with more than usual felicity; beautiful and mild as the morning; rich in youth and promise, as the season.

Mr. Mordent was in the breakfast parlour on their entrance. He saluted Ned with a civility that put him tolerably at his ease; asked him a variety of questions on points of grammar and general learning; to all of which Ned answered, with great diffidence, brevity and respect. The new servant man waited at table; his name happened to be *Ned*, which was the occasion of several *half-laughs* to Mr. Mordent. After breakfast, Ned went over to the neighbouring town and accoutred himself more in the style and habit of the day. Mr. Pelham was to dine with them. Dinner was served up with more form and profusion than was customary on a mere neighbourly

visit. Mrs. Mordent in matronly neatness was more than ordinarily fine.—Ned half-flattered himself that it was a compliment paid to the day that gave him birth; which was afterwards confirmed. The cloth being drawn, Mr. Pelham filled a glass of wine and drank Ned's health; which example was followed by all at table. He bent his eye on Helen as she took hold of her glass; she faintly coloured, and smiled as she pronounced his name: Ned's voice trembled and thanked her. His heart ached in the fulness of its gratitude, and his feelings were too complex to be particularized, or described.

Mr. Pelham then addressed himself to Ned in a long and comprehensive speech. He took a circumstantial review of his past life; of his exploits, his labours and his studies. He was an orphan in the world as far as the want

of parents or relatives rendered him so; but no further. The solitude and forlornness of his fate, first excited compassion, and his merits had demanded esteem. His releasement from his late duties had been long in contemplation, as they chained and pinioned down a mind that was capable of a wider extent of services to society. Of a life of dependence on the bounty of another, he was in no danger. Action is the element of mind. A life of independence, so called, from being exempt from the cares and labour of procuring the means of life, is commonly a life of indolence and uselessness. The dependant, as a modern author says, are always dissatisfied and unhappy, or contented and contemptible. 'INDEPENDENCE IS IN THE MIND OF MAN, OR IT IS NO WHERE.' Mr. Pelham then exhorted Ned to avoid running into the other extreme of sentiment, of which he was in the most danger. He repro-

bated and ridiculed with great success that querulous and sensitive insulation of mind; that supreme and felicitous misery, which we adopt and cherish with all the conceit of greatness, and the pride of power, and which is neither countenanced by nature nor upheld by truth. He concluded his energetic and forcible appeal, the eloquence of which had rivetted the attention of Ned with an irresistible power, by offering him his friendship, his purse and his interest, in what manner and in what degree they were most acceptable to him. Ned attempted a reply; but he could only feel, and had little to say but his thanks. Mr. Pelham desired that he would, at his leisure, arrange his thoughts and consult his feelings. He then changed the subject, and led a conversation of some length, in which Ned and Mrs. Mordent divided with him in opinion.

In the course of the evening a walk was proposed. Mr. and Mrs. Mordent and Mr. Pelham walked together. Ned squired the young ladies.

The sun was declining towards the west in tranquil majesty; and the light clouds that skirted his pavilion, hung, like fanciful drapery, around his "wavy bed."

This is the proudest day of my life, said Ned; and the purpose of that life, in future, shall be to have deserved it.

It has been *more* than deserved already, said Helen.

I am afraid we are more in danger of losing you now, than we were before, said Mary.

O! I dare say he is travelling now in his own mind, said Helen, in a voice

in which the serious overbalanced the pleasant.

When I *think not*, said Ned, you will *lose* me indeed! But while I have thought, though amid the mountain snows of Siberia, it will turn to you, as to the distant sun,—the fountain of its life and light.

That's very pretty, said Mary, and I will endeavour to remember it; so I suppose, if you were in the *tropics*, you would "turn" to us as to the source of *frost and snow*.

Helen faintly laughed, and added, you see he does *think* of travelling, Mary; and the first stage he has taken is three parts round the globe!

How you delight in perversion, said Ned. I am attached to your family by stronger ties than I can, or dare express.

A family attachment! cried Mary; including the cats and dogs, with a longer etcetera than I choose to particularize. Poor Fido! continued she, tapping him on the head as he ran by her side, it was not fit that your quondam friend, and brother tourist should have been ungrateful. We are indebted to Fido I believe for your acquaintance; had it not been for him, you might now have been some notable thrasher, or eminent waggoner!

Alas! sighed Ned, there is perhaps more truth in your sportiveness than ——,

Discretion, added Helen. A truce to reflection. With the best heart in the world, Mary has the most untractable vivacity.

Were I ever to leave you, said Ned, in rather a melancholy tone, would

you good-for-nothing girls keep my birth-day?

I would, said Mary.

That is kind, replied Ned, because it was spoken without hesitation.—Shou'd you Helen?

Law! said Helen, what a question! would you keep *ours?*

Yes, said Ned, with considerable energy,—and in a mock tragic tone,—whether riding on the mountain waves, or hemmed in by wild beasts in a forest.

Travelling again! cried Mary. With deference however to the courage of your latter situation, I think the *wild beasts* would be the most likely to keep our birth-day.

We shall remember the first of May, said Helen, with rather a sorrowful emphasis. If you ———,

The rest of the party now approached.

Go on Helen, said Mary.

I was saying nothing particular, added Helen.

The subject was changed, and our party returned home.

After supper a desultory conversation took place, in which Ned was left in a minority of *one*. The question was, whether we arrived at what was right, more by the aid of reason or feeling. Our first "address to motion," said Ned, is to do right; we are acting from the impulse of nature; I might have said from the divinity. Here you will mention the evil passions, revenge, &c. a subject that has already been amply discussed. A proper resentment is natural, and is a necessary and wholesome check upon the conduct of others.

Violence is neither natural nor proper, unless generated by violence, and it is then a due counterpoise and safeguard in society.

Young men feel, and old ones reason, said Mr. Pelham. If you had the reflection of an old man you would not have the enjoyment of a young one. We think under circumstances so different, that it is impossible we should coincide in opinion. You look forward and feel; I look back and reason.

Ned was silenced.

The conversation took a more lively turn, and was kept up till a late hour.

CHAPTER VI.

At the end of a week, Mrs. Mordent pointed out to Ned the services it was in his power to render them. It was to superintend the worldly concerns of Mr. Mordent as a friend; an agreement to which Mr. M. had readily consented, as it would relieve him of much trouble, and prevent the employment of others that were less exceptionable in point of trust.

Mr. M—'s fortune had been rapidly accumulating, as he lived very considerably within his income. She did

not impose the management of it on him as a permanent task; she wished he would, for *awhile*, undertake its arrangement. She should trespass still further on his services. He was capable of assisting her very materially in the education of her daughters. She invited his services as a proof of his friendship, and in a style of frankness so flattering, that Ned yielded to her in every particular.

When Ned reflected on his engagements, he trembled at the recollection of one of his tasks; the education of her daughers. She *knew the points where he would be most in danger,* she had said: but his *danger would be his safety; for the sentiment which it inspired would preserve him!* Ned sighed, as his mind glanced across a new understanding of this precaution. He determined however, to deserve the

good opinion which had been formed of him, with an enthusiasm of mind that would have delighted to encounter difficulties. Events however were approaching that were to turn adrift the current of his thoughts, on prospects rude as the solitude of the mountains, and wild as the ocean waves.

Mr. Mordent gave his ear to the insinuations of slander. He had not manliness enough to speak his thoughts, but brooded over his suspicions in silence, till he began to half compliment himself on his own penetration.

He one day sent a note to his old companion and counsel, *Mr. Wilkins*, requesting his company to sup with him *alone*; as he wished to consult him on a subject of great importance. The request was complied with. Mr. Wilkins was a batchelor of about forty-five

years of age, and was what every body called, *a very sensible man.* He had a light-coloured coat on, made straight before, with large white buttons from the collar down to the knees. He wore powder in his hair, and walked remarkably upright, with great formality of step. He moved with as much care and deliberation as though, if he tumbled down, he would break. He never turned his head to speak to any body without turning his body the same way, which gave infinite gravity and wisdom to what he said. His opinion on all subjects was held in great requisition, and from a habit of giving advice, he had acquired a distinct and curtailed tone of voice, formed on a principle similar to that of a town crier; and which, being governed by no desire but that of being heard and understood, kept one continued level of sound, like an organ with one stop.

Mr. Mordent poured his tale into the ear of this parish counsel, and waited with great anxiety for his opinion.

Mr. Wilkins, who possessed the vice of speech-making in an unusual degree, instead of going direct into the question, flourished away in a few common-place *given* remarks, that glanced, or rather *squinted* at consequences, before he touched upon the subject. He then gave his opinion decidedly on the side of Mr. Mordent's suspicions, interlarding by the way the surmises and suggestions of others. Mr. Mordent became confirmed in his opinions, that Ned was an improper and dangerous young man to continue in his family on a footing of trust and intimacy; he had by degrees become acquainted with the state of life from which he had originally been taken, and a faithful service of seven years

pleaded in vain against the narrow and contracted spirit of suspicion and conceit. After receiving a thousand thanks, Mr. Wilkins took a formal leave.

Mr. Mordent scarce knew what means would best effect his purpose without explanation or argument, and he was obliged to pay frequent visits to his counsel, Mr. Wilkins,--by whose advice a plan was at length resolved upon.

From their infancy Mrs. Mordent had always allowed her daughters certain stipends to expend, which were encreased as their age extended the sphere of indispensables. That amiable and unreserved affection which is so common between sisters, existed in a very strong degree between Helen and Mary, and had been particularly manifested on many occasions. On the

birth-days of Helen, Mary always sported some particular tokens of her love, which were not prepared without expence, and for which expence she always provided by degrees. Helen paid Mary the same compliment. Mary's birth-day was approaching, and Helen was making more than usual preparations to celebrate it. On such occasions it was customary for every person with whom the family had any acquaintance to be invited. In the profoundity of Mr. Wilkins's *cunning* wisdom, this was the day fixed upon to make a preparatory step or two towards their project. He was to seize such opportunities as offered of finding fault with Ned's conduct, and censuring his opinions, which he understood were not very correct. He however knew little of Ned or his opinions but by report. These censures were to serve as a colour to Mr. Mordent's future determination, and every thing

was laid down with the most mathematical precision.

It was on the 10th of July, that Ned arose with the sun to marshall the arrangements of the day of approaching festival. Having given the necessary directions to the servants, he sat down, and his thoughts rather tending to melancholy, he amused himself by endeavouring to set the following Stanzas to music, as they accorded in some measure with the colour of his feelings.

To him, this goodly earth how drear,
Whom kindreds' sweet regards disown;
'Tis his to shed the bitter tear,
And live in life's gay crowd *alone:*
The turf unbless'd that wraps his clay,
Shall never steal a tear away.

But where a PARENT's arm shall shield,
Against the threat'ning storms of strife;
How bright the joys our prospects yield!
How smooth the smiling paths of life!
How sweet to sleep with hopes so fair,
And dream not of to-morrow's care!

Thus *Mary*, sunless as *my* way,—
A path where hope shall never shine;
Not worthless were an orphan's day,
If contrast can embellish thine:
For, aught of service thee to give,
Might prompt a greater wretch to live.

Ned hummed over this dismal strain, till he almost fell in love with misery. As he sat enwrapt in the vision which his imagination had created, he was recalled to himself by a tap on the shoulder. He turned his head and met the arch eye of Mary. She begged that he would continue the ditty thro' another stanza or two, and let the conclusion be tragical; something like "might prompt an Emperor to *die*," would be a more heroic finish.

This air of burlesque had its due effect from the sweetness with which it was given. Ned's thoughts took a different turn. He complimented Mary on her talent at the cheerful.

I don't understand your keeping my birth-day, Ned, replied Mary, with any of these gloomy indulgences; they are neither just to yourself nor your friends. I shall insist on your being remarkably cheerful and pleasant till twelve o'clock to night.

Ned took her hand, and smiling promised that she should be obeyed.

Though these fits of gloom occasionally stole over his mind, Ned's general character was a too thoughtless cheerfulness. At times, scarce any thing could subdue or resist his pleasantry. Light of heart, with the bounding pulse of health, hope and spirit, he sometimes appeared as though he could drive the world before him, and would create an animation around him, as though the fire of heaven were at his disposal.

At dinner, Mr. Pelham introduced his two relations, George and Frederic Maurice, Ned's two former opponents. The former, destined for the church, had just arrived from college, and the latter, in the navy service, had given his brother the meeting at Pelham House. Their characters were as distinct as their professions; George was reserved and haughty;—Frederic, frank and abrupt. Mr. Pelham took his usual place at the right hand of Mrs. Mordent, and his friends, as strangers, on the opposite side, the usual post of Ned. Mr. Wilkins, and several merchants from B——, sat near Mr. Mordent at the bottom of the table. Helen and Mary took the centre seats on each side. The sons and daughters of several neighbouring farmers filled up the side where Helen sat, and Ned took his place at the right hand of Mary with Dr. Hicklin, the family physi-

cian, and Mr. Jonathan Weston, the curate and school-master of the neighbouring village. Mr. Wilkins and Mr. Jonathan Weston, during dinner, had taken a few glasses of wine, and the grape had put their eloquence on its legs. A point of dispute arose between them concerning what was the true province of generosity. Both however being wrong, the field of debate was proportionably extended.

If I give away a penny to a beggar, I am charitable, said Mr. Wilkins; if I give twopence I am generous.

This distinction produced a laugh. He continued. It don't become you to laugh at a person of *my years*, Mr. Bentley, singling him out from the rest.

I was not laughing at your years Sir, said Ned; the length of *your ears* Sir,

is evident ——————. Ned stopped as his mind glanced across the effect of what he was saying; it however was too late, and the laugh that followed was loud and long. The schoolmaster joined vociferously in the effect of the retort, and exclaimed, "Egad, Master Wilkins, you have been completely cropt for once." Ned protested he did not mean to say exactly what had been understood, but Mr. Wilkins could not be appeased. Though a sense of respect had somewhat abated the laugh, a titter every now and then broke out in spite of restraint. Mr. Mordent was very angry, and said he did not understand such conduct. Mr. Pelham said that the concession which had been made of its not being intended was sufficient. Frederic Maurice warmly defended Ned, though he could scarce speak intelligibly for laughing. Mr. Wilkins became vehement, and insisted

on it that he had been intentionally insulted. It was unmannerly in you, Sir, said Ned, rather irritated, to single me out from the company for having laughed with them at your distinction between charity and generosity. Mr. Mordent arose in anger, and left the room, and Mr. Wilkins followed him. Mrs. Mordent looked at Mr. Pelham, and he went after them. Mr. George Maurice addressed himself in an under tone to Mrs. Mordent, and from his manner had evidently decided against the conduct of Ned. Mrs. Mordent warmly espoused his cause, and he remained silent.

Bless me, said Helen, who is this Mr. Wilkins? He has been continually with my father lately, who always appears silent and suspicious after being in his company.

He is a great pedlar, that deals in advice, my dear, said Mary; which he goes hawking about at the lowest prices.

I am afraid he is a smuggler in the trade then, said Frederic Maurice, and that the article has never paid the stamp duty of understanding.

Mrs. Mordent was now called out, and a significant silence followed.

Ned expressed his regret that he should unwittingly have been the cause that interrupted the pleasantry of the company. Mary replied that he had rather contributed to their pleasantry than otherwise; that she was sorry her father was offended, but that on a moment's reflection the misunderstanding would disappear. As for Mr. Wilkins, continued she ——.

O! added Helen, he cannot give a stronger instance of *charity* than by taking his leave.

In a short time the parties returned and took their places.

Helen bent her eye on her father as though she would ascertain the state of his mind from his countenance. He appeared more cheerful than usual, and Mr. Wilkins resumed his garrulity; but Mrs. Mordent was silent, and Mr. Pelham lost in thought.

Near the bottom of the table sat a wrinkled old man. A few thin grey hairs lay smoothly on his high forehead, and a piercing eye shot the wandering fire of observation from the hollow sockets of age. He had particularly regarded Ned and the Miss Mordents, but, hitherto, scarce a syl-

lable had escaped him. He now attracted attention by a singular proposal. He addressed Mrs. Mordent in a shrill-toned voice, and in a chaste English accent, and requested that she would give the toast of "SOMEBODY;" the ladies to drink it in water if they preferred it. Mary startled at the proposal, and directed all her attention to the proposer. Mrs. Mordent, from a consideration of politeness, gave the toast. As Ned filled his glass he felt as though the eyes of every person at table were fixed upon him. Helen sat opposite him. He caught her eye, as his intelligent glance crossed the direction of hers, and he drank the toast to the dregs. *Somebody,* said Mary, in a hurried tone and embarrassed manner, that were very unusual in her. The significant *Somebody* went round.—Some gave it with the rolling eye that looked at *every body,* and others

as though they thought of *nobody*. *Somebody,* said the old man, who proposed it, in a louder tone than any other part of the company. *Somebody,* said Helen, with her eye fixed upon the pure element she drank.

The old man now arose and left the room, and a considerable pause followed.

Your friend, at length said Mr. Mordent, to a gentleman who had sat next the old man, is rather a singular character.

He is no friend of mine, replied the gentleman; I never saw him before.

Who *is* he then? said Mr. Mordent, addressing himself generally to the company.

Nobody answered. Mary hung down her head.

Do you know any thing of him Mary? said Mrs. Mordent. Nothing, mother, said Mary, with a firm voice.

Have you never seen him before? continued Mrs. Mordent.

Never.

I understood him to be a friend of these gentlemen, said Mr. Mordent, for he was conversing with them before dinner, and I wondered they did not introduce him.

He introduced himself to us, replied one of the gentlemen, and supposing him to be a friend of the family, we entered into conversation with him.

Do *you* know any thing of him, Ned? said Mr. Mordent, with a suspicious look.

Nothing Sir, said Ned, in rather a lofty voice; but I *will* know who he is;—and he immediately left the room in search of him.

The bell was rang, and the servants were questioned.

They knew no more than any body else; but said, that when he came out of the parlour he took his hat and went towards the plantations, and that Mr. Bentley had followed him.

Four hours elapsed, and Ned did not return! Several of the servants had been dispatched in search of him, but in vain.

Mr. Mordent and Mr. Wilkins insisted on it, that Ned and the old man understood each other, and that they no doubt had formed some wicked designs against the peace of the family.

Mrs. Mordent and Mr. Pelham, repelled the charge.

They will neither of them shew their faces again, said Mr. Wilkins, with great self-complacency.

Terror and alarm prevailed, and put an end to the festivity of the day. All the company departed, except Mr. Pelham and his two relatives, and Mr. Wilkins.

A supper room had been fitted up by Helen for a party, entitled the SELECTS; and which was ornamented with appropriate devices. Such of the company as were preferred, were to be invited to remain the night, and every thing that could provoke amusement or excite pleasure, had been studied and prepared for the party of the *Selects*. But mystery and alarm, like

ghosts, had flitted across the scene of pleasure, and the charm was dissolved.

Helen and Mary met alone in this retreat of projected bliss, and as their eyes met they were suffused with tears. The feelings and thoughts of each were too evident to need explanation.

We will sup together *here*, said Helen, in "double pomp of sadness."—Nature prescribes no limits to perseverance; Ned will yet return, but he will first discover the ——.

Heaven forbid, said Mary.

Forbid! echoed Helen.

I don't know, added Mary, but—I am afraid ——. You would not wish a poor old man to be hurt, Helen. Though he had such a piercing eye,

there was something mild and gentle in his countenance.

Ned will not hurt an old man, said Helen. But if he should oblige him to return! said Mary.

We shall then know who he is, added Helen.

He will be harshly treated, said Mary.

You feel a strange interest in his fate, said Helen. Do you know *nothing* of him Mary?

Nothing, said Mary, and she burst into tears.

Helen embraced her sister with the most affectionate kindness. I am the last person that will intentionally distress you, said she; we will discontinue the subject.

How shall we excuse ourselves from attending supper? said Mary,—soothed and reassured by these marks of affection.

I'll write a note to my mother, said Helen.

At supper time, Mrs. Mordent, on receiving the note, and placing a perfect reliance on the discretion of her daughters, said the girls were busy, and begged to be excused. She was alarmed and distressed at the absence of Ned. A silence however was observed on the subject, though the triumph in the eye of Mr. Wilkins, whenever he looked at Mr. Mordent, was brutally evident.

A eleven o'clock, as Mr. Pelham rose to depart, he said he was afraid that the persevering resolution of Ned

had led him into some danger, and that he intended on his arrival at home, to dispatch his servants in search of him.

His wicked plots are discovered and he has decamped, said Mr. Wilkins.

Mr. Pelham turned an angry eye upon the trembling Mr. Wilkins, and said with great severity of tone, I caution you, Sir, against continuing to insinuate any thing to the prejudice of a young man, whose integrity, and whose ability are as much above your power, as they are beyond your comprehension;—and who will quickly be placed in a situation where he cannot be slandered with impunity.

The whole of the company now took their leave. Mrs. Mordent, at twelve o'clock, giving orders for a servant to

sit up for Ned, in a manner that indicated a certainty of his return, went to bed,—Mr. Mordent having previously retired.

Helen and Mary yet remained in the appropriated supper room, where all their hopes and fears had been discussed with that innocent ingenuousness which had always characterized their affection. Being little disposed for sleep, and finding the servants had orders to sit up for Ned, they agreed to remain themselves some considerable time longer in hopes of his return. The rain at different intervals had fallen during the night, and now became very heavy. It pattered against the windows where they sat, and the dismal howling of the wind, which ever and anon fell in whistling cadences, added to the gloom and melancholy which the hour inspired. A trembling anxiety for the

fate of our hero, prevailed over every other consideration in the minds of Helen and Mary. A deep and grateful sense of his services,—of the harmony and good understanding in which they so long had lived—of his ability, courage, and integrity—of his orphan fate—what he had been, and what he was—all mixed and melted in recollection.

A deep silence reigned throughout the house, interrupted only by the fitful ravings of the storm. The clock struck one!

He will never return, said Helen; that monster of mystery ———, she looked at her sister and stopt.

You may think my conduct inexplicable, said Mary, but that old man is not a greater stranger to you, Helen, than he is to me.

Whence then the peculiar interest you feel? said Helen.

A trifling and almost ridiculous incident—I would tell you—but—*I will tell you,* said Mary, with increased energy, instinctively looking round the room, and then lowering her voice,—Near six months ago, as I was returning alone from ———

A loud gust of wind blew suddenly against the window, and she mechanically stopped.

Why should I hesitate? you ought to know, and I *will* proceed ——— Returning alone—She paused in terror as though she half-expected some dreadful warning not to proceed.

——Returning alone from the ——

The dismal howl of the mastiff, made them both start from their seats. Hope faintly brightened in the eyes of Helen, and terror suspended the faculties of Mary. A silence ensued.

My dear Mary, what is it that you have to say? said Helen.

I hope Ned will never leave us, said Mary; I may require his protection. I ought not to be terrified from doing what is right, and what ought to have been done before. I will proceed—the night was dark, and I was returning alone from the neighbouring village—

Terror again crossed the untold tale. The sound of approaching footsteps were heard, and hope and fear upon the tip-toe stood in mingled expectation.

The door opened, and Ned appeared before them. He was so splashed with dirt and drenched in rain, that they scarcely recognized him. The langour of his frame bespoke his toils. His look denoted equal melancholy aud fatigue, and holding out a hand to each, he sat him down in silence.

I have seen my man, said he, in a triumphant tone;—(Mary trembled) but mystery envelopes alike, him and his purposes. The story is long.—We will hear no more then to night, said Helen. You are wet and weary. We are sufficiently happy that you are returned in safety, and shall sleep in peace. You shall go to bed instantly, Ned; and the servant shall bring you what refreshment you require.

Mary joined in the requisition, and Ned complied. He gave them each

a brother's holy kiss, and bade them good night. Helen crept softly into her mother's room, and whispered her the tidings. She then joined her sister, and retired to rest.

CHAPTER VII.

Ned did not arise in the morning till a late hour. The rest of the family had breakfasted. He dispatched a secret message to Mrs. Mordent, and she waited on him in a private room, where breakfast was brought in.

No services will avail you, Ned, said Mrs. Mordent;, we must part.

I know it, replied Ned; the world is before me; my plans are fixed,

I hope not, Ned, continued Mrs. Mordent. Mr. Pelham wishes to see you; you must not leave us till some arrangements have been agreed upon, that are worthy of you and of ourselves.

I must deserve the friendship of Mr. Pelham, and the many honors I have received from your family, said Ned. Your mysterious visitor, yesterday,—

The door opened, and Mr. Mordent entered, with a letter in his hand. In a peremptory tone, and as though acting from some immediate cause, he gave Ned orders to leave his house within an hour,—for ever! Having said this, without any explanation he left the room. Ned arose, as though to obey this imperious injunction; he took Mrs. Mordent's hand,—the tear trembled in her eye, and she begged and entreated him to go to Mr. Pelham.

We are unjust to your merits, said she; we are going to lose you Ned, when I am afraid we shall stand most in need of your services. This fresh instance of Mr. Mordent's injustice, grieves me; but grief avails not. But of this mysterious old man—I hate mystery, and fear it. What do you know of him?

More than I can now disclose, said Ned; but you shall hear; *who he is* I have not discovered. I learnt from him the state of Mr. Mordent's mind respecting myself. The principal object of his visit he appears to have attained; though what that was I have not been able to learn. It certainly bears some relation to Mary;—do not be alarmed;—she is safe. Do not distress her by enquiries; leave her to the operations of her own mind, and all will be right.

You will go to Mr. Pelham's, Ned, said the entreating voice of Mrs. Mordent.

I will go to Mr. Pelham's, replied Ned, in a quick trembling tone. He left the room to prepare for his departure, and as he withdrew, I shall see you again, he added, scarce trusting the direction of his eye, and hurried away.

As he went through the hall, he asked where the Miss Mordents were.

In the plantations, said the servant.

He went up stairs. The chambermaid was in the room, and after regarding him some time, said, Eh God, Mr. Edward, sure what are you doin g

I am going to leave you, Sally, said Ned.

Sally opened her mouth as though she doubted the intelligence conveyed by her ears. Why sure you *beant*, Mr. Bentley, she added, with her eyes as wide open as the muscular system would admit of, and as though they determined not to be undone by her mouth. She then ran down stairs to bear the intelligence to others.

Ned soon finished the packing of his moveables. To what friend shall I direct them for the present, thought he; *friend!* I have no friend! No relative! not even an acquaintance, here excepted, in the wide world! He shook the encroaching softness from him, and went down stairs. The servants were assembled in the kitchen. He asked if the ladies were returned from the plantations, and receiving an answer in the negative, he shook them all kindly by the hand, and bade them farewell. The

girls wept, for he was a particular favorite with them all. Sorrow and wonder kept them silent. They followed him to the door. Mrs. Mordent was in the parlour with Mr. Mordent. I will avoid the pain of taking leave under such circumstances, thought he: I will write to her my feelings and my thanks. He then waved his hand to the servants and entered the plantations.

Ned bent his way to the *Favorite;* a name given to a particular avenue, where Helen and Mary commonly walked. The idea of leaving the Miss Mordents, came painfully across his mind, and yet it was accompanied with some delicious alleviations. He pictured in his mind the pleasure he should take in thinking of them: that he should bear, wherever he went, the charm of their presence in his heart.

He thought of the interest they would feel in his fate; of the pleasure it would afford them to hear of him. As he drew nearer their favorite walk these charms were weakened, and he could think only of the present. He had to take leave of Helen; the kind, the ingenuous Helen! whom he never approached but with a secret and indefinable pleasure. The glance of her eye could dissolve him into bliss; her voice, when she addressed him, sunk like dying music into his soul. But, to touch her hand, awoke

"The nerve of rapture and the heart of flame."*

He recollected all her past kindness to him, and memory traced her like an angel of light through the dim retrospect of life; yet he was going to leave her, perhaps for ever! And Mary! the graceful, the gay, the affectionate

* Roscoe.

Mary! whose vivacity, like summer lightning, played round the heart with hurtless splendour. As he wandered along, his feelings obtained a powerful ascendancy, and he awhile stood still, as though to rally the ebbing spirit of resolution before he approached them. This pause, in some measure, diverted the swelling current of thought. He resumed his pace, and turning a corner, discovered the ladies at a short distance. On his joining them they expressed some surprize at seeing him so soon, as, from their mother, they were led to understand, she required a long interview with him, which they were instructed not to interrupt.

That interview was interrupted by a less welcome visitor, said Ned. But I must not let time so precious as the present be wasted on selfish considera-

tions. You have learnt no doubt that we must part. Our friendly intercourse is at an end.

Silence and averted eyes bespoke what they knew and what they felt.

The stranger that I pursued, Mary, spoke of you; but in terms so ambiguous and unexplained, as to encrease rather than to solve the mystery of his visit.

Helen looked at Mary.

Repeat all that I have told you, said Mary.

Mary has made known to me this morning Ned, said Helen, a circumstance that seems to relate to the mission of this old man; and which I scarce know whether most to dread or despise. She

was returning home one evening by herself when it was dreadfully dark; and was overtaken by another person who addressed her by her name in that kind of artless tone of good-will that immediately banished every suspicion, in respect to the intentions of the persons who addressed her. As she approached home, the person made a stop and said he had a note to deliver to her, which she took. Altering his tone, he then entreated, as she valued her own happiness and the safety of her friends, she would obey its injunctions.—He then immediately disappeared.—Partly from terror, and an anxiety for her friends, and partly from a hope that nothing more would transpire on the subject, she has never before communicated the circumstance.—Helen then presented the note, which had been preserved, to Ned; and which was to the following effect:

"The hand of fate is upon the person who now addresses you; he will be a demon of terror to those who shall dare to cross his purposes. Form no attachment, or your peace and happiness may be ruined for ever. Do you love your friends? Let them remain in ignorance of this communication. Be discreet and you shall be happy.

Yours, more than may appear,

"SOMEBODY."

Ned read it and was lost in thought. Would I were not going to leave you, he at length said.

You are not going to leave us altogether at present, said Helen.

I return to your house no more, added he. This is the last time I may ever see you; your doors are shut against me for ever! He paused.

Your tranquillity has been cruelly invaded, he continued; from what cause or with what designs may be never known to me; what little I saw of this old man you will hear from your mother. In my adventurous course, could I have turned to the placid delight of considering you, as you were a few days ago, in the bosom of peace and security, I had been comparatively happy. Care and anxiety will now be my companions.

This is very unpleasant intelligence Ned, said Mary; are we never to hear of you?

When I can communicate pleasure I will write, he answered.

But where are you going Ned? said the trembling Helen.

To raise the structure of my own fortune, he replied. The world is

wide; health, strength, and common understanding, I at least possess. If properly directed, what may not these procure? What I am, I owe to you; what I may be I shall owe to you. If I succeed, you shall see me again.

. . . .

Here is a ring, Ned, said Mary; will you wear the trifling remembrancer?

Ned accepted it in silence, and kissed the fair hand from which it was taken.

Here, said Helen,—colouring as she spoke, is a small locket—taking it from her bosom. I give it you, not because it is valuable in itself, but—because—I value it. If ever you return you shall give it me again.

Ned's heart beat high as she spoke: he took it with a miser's hand, that

trembled with its treasure. His emotions became powerfully painful. They had now reached the end of the avenue from whence a small gate led into the grounds of Mr. Pelham. Ned embraced them each and hurried away; scarcely trusting his voice to say farewell! They returned in silence, and in tears.

We shall see him again, Helen, said Mary, after a pause of considerable length. Mary always had considered Helen as the favorite of Ned. Yet he was so equal in his attentions to each, that her delight and admiration of him gradually increased, and she appeared to like him the better for the preference he had formed.

Helen returned no answer.

On their arrival at home, they went direct to their separate apartments.

At Mr. Pelham's, Ned found nobody but Mr. George Maurice; who received him with a kind of formal and distant acknowledgment. He looked as tho' he remembered his former adventure with him, and the recollection appeared to give an effect to his countenance that proclaimed its cause. Mr. Pelham, accompanied by Frederic, had gone by a different route to Mr. Mordent's. Ned left a message of respect, and took his leave. He went direct for ———, where he remained a few days, deliberating on the conduct he should pursue.

On the third day he sent over a person for his luggage, with a small packet addressed to Mrs. Mordent. It contained two bracelets of the same value and pattern, directed to the Miss Mordents; and three letters, severally directed to Mr. Mordent, Mrs. Mordent,

and Mr. Pelham; and were to the following effect.

To Mr. Mordent.

Sir,

From whatever causes have arisen the prejudices you at present entertain against me, I cannot but acquit you of all ill-intention; because, against me individually, you can have no dislike. Your conduct has no doubt been influenced by a desire to promote, what you may consider, the security and peace of your family. That you may succeed is the fervent wish of yours, &c.

E. B.

To Mr. Pelham.

Dear Sir,

Ere you receive this, I may have left this part of the country, perhaps for ever; perhaps not. I feel, as every

man must feel, the generosity with which you have offered me your friendship and services. Proud as I am in having to boast of your friendship, you will acquit me of all unworthy motives in declining your services, when you are informed that it is my peculiar pride to be the promoter of my own fortune. To *win and wear* is my motto; I have strength and spirit equal to the task, and a strong presentiment of success. The circumstances under which I leave a family, endeared to me by so many claims, and from which I have been so rudely and so unjustly separated, will be a long and painful subject of reflection. I need not enjoin the continuance of your guardian care.

I am, Sir,

With due sentiments of gratitude and respect, &c.

E. B.

To Mrs. Mordent.

There are many of our feelings so refined in their nature, that, to attempt to describe them, would be to libel them. Rather, therefore, than let them appear in expression so unlike what they are in reality, it is common to decline the wretched attempts to convey them by words, and solicit credit for the possession of feelings which are honourable to the causes that produced them. That this is my case you will readily conceive, for I should have more to express than ever man had before.

When I overtook the mysterious stranger, whose baneful presence, like a cloud, had crossed the day of festivity, he neither seemed alarmed nor surprised. I had traced him by tedious enquiries to an inn, in the neighbourhood of ——. He called me an

extraordinary young man, and begged I would not waste my time by asking him any questions. He was no enemy of the family; he wished to see and hear the youngest daughter;—and he *had* seen and heard her. Beauty and virtue were sacred, and she was safe. He then told me that calumny had been busy with my character, and that on my return, I should find my discharge from the family. Neither force nor intreaty would have extorted more. His manners seemed to be so much like those of an honest man that I implicitly gave him credit for the purity of his professions, involved in mystery as they were. I remained several hours in his company with a view to fathom, as far as observation would enable me, so singular a character in dress, manners and language; he is certainly a gentleman. His converstion is brilliant and impressive in a very unusual

degree, and in his presence I nearly forgot the design of my pursuit. I however freely censured the means he took of getting admittance into the house, as irreconcilable with honesty and upright intention. He observed, that I might take what tether I chose in abuse, but that he must be excused in replying to it. I remained with him till a late hour without being able to arrive at any clue in respect to his designs. From the man, I should be partly compelled to believe that there was nothing either desperate or wicked in them. That the sprightly and beautiful Mary should however be thus beset by mystery, is a matter of alarm as well as grief. Would I could have remained her protector!

In common terms, I am going to *seek my fortune.* My fame is in the hands of too powerful advocates not

to be secure. Slander is a cloud, that may darken for a while the brightest character; but it shall be dissolved by the rays of truth, or dispersed by the current of circumstance.

I need add no more; before you receive this I shall be on the road of enterprise. My effects follow me. That I bear with me your best wishes, and those of your amiable daughters, is a consolation that would support me under greater difficulties than I may ever have to encounter. You will some time ———— I can say no more.

Adieu, adieu,

E. B.

CHAPTER VIII.

Time passed heavily and silently on at Charkley House. Scarce an observation had been made that related to those recent events that had made such an inroad on the peace and comforts of its society. On the arrival of Ned's packet, the letter addressed to Mrs. Mordent, was shewn by her to Mr. Mordent, but was returned without an answer.

Mr. Mordent was declining fast into the "vale of years." The peevishness

and irascibility of his temper were greater than ever. His attachment to his daughters, however, appeared to get stronger; a circumstance that gave peculiar pleasure to Mrs. Mordent. One evening he appeared to be particularly kind to Helen. He told her that she had more patience than her runagate sister, and that he should make her a trifling present as a proof of his approbation of her conduct. Helen hoped he would give one to Mary as well, and then she should consider her own of double the value. Well, well, he said, he should think about it. Mr. Wilkins entered the room, and the conversation was changed. Helen retired.

Mr. Mordent related to Mr. Wilkins the communication made by Ned; which proved a fruitful source of conjecture to them both. The conclusion was, that Mary should be sent for and

examined. Mary received the summons in the presence of her mother, who would have sent an apology, but as she expressed a readiness of compliance, and at the same time mentioned what would probably be the subject, it was left to her own discretion.

On her entrance, she curtsied to her father; and with a very slight acknowledgment of the presence of Mr. Wilkins, took her seat. The father looked at Mr. Wilkins and Mr. Wilkins looked at the father,—it not having been agreed upon who should be the examinant. Mr. Mordent, to give his friend the preference, left the room, and requested she would remain. The beauty of her person, and the effects of a fine streaming eye, rather dissipated the recollection of Mr. Wilkins. In the eye of a philosopher it might have

been considered as an improved experiment on the substance of light. It has been proved that a needle balanced to turn with the slightest possible friction, by having a strong ray of light bent on either of its extremities, will revolve. I will not say absolutely that Mr. Wilkins's *person revolved*, but he was certainly agitated; his *mind*, however, underwent something like a *revolution*. But a batchelor's nerves at five and forty, under the gaze of youth and beauty, is a kind of *solar harp*, that yields no music to the touch, but in the dalliance of light *trembles* in ecstasy. After a little hemming, Mr. Wilkins was sufficiently himself to presume that she was the youngest daughter of Mr. Mordent, and that her name was Mary.

Her name and age were in the family bible, which she would fetch if he required it.

This did not operate as a restorative to the gentleman's recollection. He informed her that he was not *joking*.

If he were *serious* in doubting her age, he had better have the book.

Worse, and worse! This is not what is my intention, Miss Mordent.

She had no right to conclude that he said one thing and intended another.

Your family, Miss Mordent, has been intruded upon by an unpleasant visitor.

It *has*, *sir*, (with some emphasis.)

The intentions of that visitor I am afraid are wicked.

I am afraid they are, sir.

What do you know of that visitor, Miss Mordent? I intreat you to be sincere.

To be sincere sir, I believe him to be an officious and intermeddling person that insinuates himself into other peoples, concerns, and by creating dissentions among families, derives an importance that is not properly his own. He is a kind of caricature of prudence, who doubts every thing because he understands nothing—an experiment on human nature, intended to prove how small a portion of mind is necessary to move the mechanism of its frame.

Mr. Wilkins's astonishment, for he could not misapply the picture, gradually increased till she concluded, and left him in a kind of stupid stare. To the paleness of fear, for he felt as though he were being gibbeted, suc-

ceeded the slow tide of anger; his neckcloth seemed to be too tight, and he shifted about with a contested uneasiness, occasioned by a dreadful combat in his pericranium between pride and good breeding.. He was a considerable time in recovering from the shock. Mary desired to know if he had any thing else to observe. He should speak to her father. Mary retired.

On the return of Mr. Mordent, Mr. Wilkins did not exactly tell the truth, for he insinuated that he had discovered that Mary was secretly attached to Ned, and that she had treated him in a very unbecoming manner for having been the means of his departure. Mr. Mordent was highly incensed, and shaking his friend by the hand, begged he would overlook the pertness of such a mad-cap. She should feel

his anger. Mr. Wilkins took his leave about one foot less in stature than when he came.

Since the absence of Ned, on whom, hitherto, a sorrowful silence had been observed, Mrs. Mordent and her daughters had had frequent conferences on the mysterious billet addressed to Mary, and its connexion with the visit of the strange old man. Curiosity and alarm were strongly excited; though, in the anxious cares of a mother, the latter had infinitely the ascendancy. The most unreserved confidence had been enjoined and promised. This had restored to them an equanimity of mind that was not unlike the effect of security.

Mr. Mordent, the morning after the interview with Mr. Wilkins, took his seat at breakfast with one of his sour

morning faces. His state of mind was therefore immediately known to his family. Their cheerful attention to him, that suffered no abatement from his looks, rather disconcerted his sulks and frequently put him off his guard. He could discover no want of harmony and content around him. His mind, like an unobserved ghost behind the winter's semicircle of mirth and jollity, scowled round the cheerful groupe in vain. He was half ashamed of the ill-humour that devoured him, and frequently gulped down his rising bitterness. Mary knew that it was pointed at her, and she conducted herself with unusual propriety, yet without any abatement of her accustomed gaiety. She wished him to observe the difference in the respect she paid to him and his friend.

Mr. Mordent knew how much his family grieved on the account of Ned,

and this cheerful sacrifice to his will was not without its effect. Perceiving the muscles of ill will to be relaxing, Helen called on her father for the fulfilment of his promise. Mary was running over the keys of the harpsichord, and without any knowledge of what was going forward, asked her sister if she would *scrape* with her half a year towards a *grand piano*. Helen looked at her father, and said she would if her father would *scrape* with them. Mr. Mordent had suffered the pleasurable emotions to grow on him by degrees till he was unwilling to check them, and he surprised them all, by asking them what was the price of one —putting his hand into his pocket, as though by stealth. *A round and sound, one hundred pound,* said Mary, in a kind of a chaunt, and accompanying it on the music. Mr. Mordent threw a note on the table,

and saying if they would be good girls he should grudge them nothing, he abruptly left the room—as though ashamed of being considered an indulgent father! Mrs. Mordent's tears came in her eyes, as she gazed on the silent rapture of her daughters, and kissing them, said she hoped all would yet be well.

The harmony of our family continued to improve. Mr. Wilkins's visits were received with more coldness, and Mr. Mordent was more than a thousand times repaid for his late conciliatory manners. The recollection of Ned, turned adrift on the world, pledged by his own courage to win his way thro' the eternal competition of life, without one solitary friend, or even the most distant connexion on whom to rest the eye of acquaintance, softened

into a pleasureable anxiety. His name however was seldom mentioned; tho' frequently as they sat around the evening fire, and Fido before them on the hearth reclined himself in listlessness, an intelligent silence would give intimation of their thoughts.

"How ugly that fellow looks," said Cleopatra, of the man who brought her the news of Marc Antony's marriage.---With good tidings the picture is reversed. At a watering place on the western coast of England, one of the most loathsome and squalid figures in the town is the Postman. Yet there is nobody knocks at the door that, in general, meets with such pleasant faces. With what delight will the eyes of a girl of eighteen trace his steps as he approaches her dwelling! His form, awry; his features, "misery worn to habitude;" his filthy, flabby hands, are

all run over by the wandering eye of youth and beauty with as much pleasure as a Grecian model. Dead to sympathy is the being; cold is his heart, and the recreant current of life creeps miserably through his veins, who does not think the *postman* one of the pleasantest looking men in the parish!

Helen and Mary were taking their customary walk arm in arm, before breakfast, when they saw at a distance, with his little interesting packet, the *village postman* open the gate that led to their house. They immediately pressed forward to meet him, and the letter was tendered.

Helen's hopes sunk as her eye glanced across the hand-writing, and Mary trembled when she perceived that it was addressed to herself. The postman was paid, and they struck into a

narrow avenue, with that greedy interest that would preclude all interruption.

Helen was the reader.

COPY.

"I have commenced a harsh, and so far, an ungrateful task. To terrify you were monstrous, yet under a mask of mystery must I still address you. Be not alarmed; you are as secure as the eaglet on the rock; and he who should dare to approach you with violence, would raise a demon in your defence. You are be-set by attention, though, ere you receive this, the mountain waves may roll between us. I am pledged to enterprize; if I succeed, you shall no longer be wo[illegible]d in am-

buscade: If I fail, I sleep in unconscious peace.

"Darkness my pillow, and my bed the dust."

"Yours, *inexpressibly*,

"SOMEBODY."

Upon my troth, Mary, said Helen, you have one of the strangest lovers I ever heard of. I don't know whether I don't admire the fellow for his consummate boldness. What are the odds that he is not worth a shilling? Don't look so grave, my dear; he'll bring back the East Indies with him, and then you are to see this dreadful person. With a heart like Julius Cæsar's beating in his breast, he is gone to conquer the world, my dear, which he intends to roll at your beautiful feet!

Though Helen meant to be cheerful, she could not divest herself of some alarm. Mary faintly smiled at her sis-

ter. An unpleasant expectation hung on her spirits, and she said little. On their arrival at home, a conference was held, and Mrs. Mordent read the letter, which bore the post-mark of ——

Lamentation avails not, she observed. It is a case, in which we can do nothing more than be discreet. Let us continue this unreserved confidence in each other, and we at least, then, shall have the consolation of knowing, that *we deserve to be happy*.

Time rolled on, and all impressions of danger were gradually effaced. Another source of mortification to our family, arose in the frequent and assiduous attendance of Mr. George Maurice. As the time approached for his return to College, he evidently wished to engage the notice of Helen. He fell into that officiousness which overshoots its own purpose. His eye seem-

ed to hold her wants and inclinations in a continual state of blockade; an eternal centinel, on the look out for employment,—a species of attention that is as unpleasant to ladies as the insensibility of indifference.—Helen very soon perceived the drift of his civilities, and adopted a method of rebuke that was as effectual as it was novel. She had sustained this siege of arts with great patience for some time. Weary of evasions, she at length employed the artillery of *ridicule*, and the attacks of wit, and charges of passion, were alike disconcerted. She would frequently break in upon the spherical music of the rounding period and with a single word would transform the sublime to the ridiculous. The feelings that induce every man to avoid the contempt of others, at length constrained Mr. Maurice to abandon his pretensions. By lowering his claims

to the standard of respectful attention, he was again received with accustomed civility. It had been his first effort in gallantry, and he therefore put his failure down to the score of inexperience. He arrived at the conviction too, that the rusticated manners of the Miss Mordents did not allow him a fair trial; as a scholar his merits had not been appreciated. Our collegian suffered little therefore in his own estimation. Frederic Maurice, by a very different conduct, had become rather a favourite, where his brother was treated only with that constrained civility which is paid as a debt to society. Frederic was always willing to be pleased without *weighing causes*, if the expression may be allowed. He entered into all the little *idlenesses* of life with the greatest alacrity and glee; content to receive less pleasures, where greater ones did not present them-

selves. The two brothers in their amusements, might be compared to two fishermen,—one of which baits for a particular fish, and sits for hours in imperial solitude for a bite;—the other, with the palatable worm, finds constant employment and variety of prey.

George Maurice returned to college, and Frederic to his adventurous profession.

CHAPTER IX.

Ah! think what cares must ache within his breast,
Who loathes the lingering road, yet has no home of rest!

SOUTHEY.

In returning to our Hero, it may not be amiss to take a brief view of the state of mind under which he commenced his tour of fortune.

As an orphan on the world, Ned had more affection to bestow on his friends than he would have had, if the claims of a parent had occupied a place in his heart. He could but know and feel

the interest which he excited, and the esteem in which he was held, at Charkley House. He knew that he had nothing to do but concede to the requests of his friends, to be placed in a situation, comparatively easy and enviable, with that in which he had voluntarily thrown himself. It was therefore in the very pride of his heart that he determined to *raise the structure of his own fortune.* He could not associate ideas of happiness with a friendship, which in his own opinion he did not deserve, and on a level with which he was not placed by circumstances. In concerting his schemes of advancement, no toil appeared wearisome; no danger formidable;—his imagination bounded over difficulties as a dream, and pressed forward to the *eclat* of his return, which he adjusted in his own mind with the most dramatic circumspection. If alarm for the

safety of his friends for a moment flitted across his fancy, or love intruded its thousand anxieties upon his tranquillity, still, the general character of his mind, was ardor of expectation, and promptitude of pursuit. England was at war with the growing power of France. His immediate object therefore was to bend his way to some large seaport town, where enterprize was held in constant requisition.

Ned knew little of the character of his own country, but from books, in which every reader is accustomed to concede something to embellishment. He was therefore about to make a praxisu pon his theoretic estimate of life. In his accoutering himself for travel, he neither sacrificed to service nor to show. He disposed of some things and purchased others, holding

a medium between what was idly ornamental, and meanly inferior.

The rising sun threw a feeble light across the yet slumbering world, when Ned appeared on foot on the wide western road. The morning dew rested heavily on the dust, and the scene was silent as night, save here and there, a roused rustic, hovering about his labour, made a clatter to denote that he was stirring. As the sun rose higher in the firmament, and his beams shot less obliquely through the morning's heavy atmosphere, the scene gradually assumed more life, and the buzz of busy day soon called the reflecting mind of our hero more immediately to the objects around hin.

If a man's views were merely to procure his subsistence, he might look around him, in whatever situation of

skill or dexterity, to effect his purpose. It will be necessary however, that where a man lives by animal labour, he should have only animal wants; and it will be found that a dreadful portion of the miseries, and mortifications of life, are placed, by the sources from which they arise, without the little circumscribed sphere of wants and woes of the cottager. Alas! and to what do all the anxieties of fame and ambition tend? Take the hoary warrior, bending beneath his load of honors, from the side of his Sovereign, to the parish workhouse, and, for the sake of returning to the prospects of early life, he would exchange fates with the son of a pauper! Take the world's idol, in the drear hour of midnight silence, when languishing under the pain of disease, and he would gladly abandon the loathsome scene of magnificence and misery,

and for the rosy health of the peasant, encounter his rags and wretchedness! Such were the thoughts that passed hurryingly through the mind of Ned, as he observed the ploughman whistling in accompaniment to his toil; and the general appearance of cheerfulness and alacrity, that were discoverable in the countenance and action of labour. But he had contracted desires and formed expectations, which, within the little round of ordinary enjoyments, could not be gratified and fulfilled. His path was chalked out by the hand of fate; danger, difficulty and toil lay before him, but which, to the youthful adventurer, prompt, and on the tiptoe for action, instead of holding out the flag of terror, invites him to a trial of his strength.

Towards mid-day, our hero, oppressed with heat and dust, took shel-

ter from the burning sun in a neat village inn. Every thing around him looked coarse, clean and comfortable, and he resolved to wait till the mildness of the evening rendered travelling a less fatigue. He took his seat in the kitchen by the side of an elderly man, who, from his dusty shoon and "shining" face, was on travel likewise. Travellers, whether high or low, like dogs, always claim, without ceremony, a kind of passing acquaintance; when, perhaps, had they lived next door to each other for half a century, they would never have spoken. By his accent, Ned soon discovered that he was conversing with a Frenchman. He therefore, addressed him in his own language, and pleasure brightened the face of the *Gaul*, to hear again the sound of his native tongue.

Ned soon discovered that the foreigner was one of those exiled literati which the French revolution has distributed over the globe like jews; and who have contributed in no ordinary degree to bring learning into contempt by increasing the number of its dependents. A wandering exile, weary and old and grey could not but excite the sympathy of our hero, and call forth his attention. They were travelling with different views, in the same direction. When the sun shot his westering rays with gentle warmth through the little diamond panes of the village inn, our travellers recommenced their journey with a view to reach the next town, about ten miles distant, before night. The characters of the two rival nations, England and France, and the tendency of recent events, became their subjects of conversation. M. de Laurent, which was

the Frenchman's name, was a philosopher of the old School. He liked what he had been accustomed to. His sympathies had been used to flow in a particular channel; and his feelings had been domesticated in the narrow and social circle of a village neighbourhood.

Your nation is as distant in its character, from ours, said De Laurent, as though it were in the opposite hemisphere. There is nothing that the two nations possess in common, but their political hatred of each other.

Is there an end to every thing but our animosity? asked Ned.

If one, or both of the countries were less powerful they would be better friends, replied the foreigner.—Power, in nations as well as indivi-

duals, appears to be desired and valued, only to be exercised. The warring elements of human nature are always on the tiptoe for action. There is a pride that impels nations from conquest to encroachment, and from defeat to revenge. Every man, occasionally, speaks impressive truths; and Paine, whom I quote not from respect, spoke dreadfully true when he said, that having exhausted our strength and resources, we sit down to rest and call it peace.

Paine, said Ned, might have been an ornament to society. He is the strongest proof that I know, that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." It made him vain and officious; he was overset, like a vessel at sea, *for want of ballast*.

Or rather, said De Laurent, he was like the man who pretends to raise the Devil, without having the power, to use a quaint English term of yours, to *lay* him again. A revolution, I speak from experience, is *le Diable*. Our modern philosophers rose a power that commanded themselves.

Yet a professed hatred of war and oppression, appears to be one of the leading principles of the sect you mention, said Ned.

That is owing to the ignorance of some, and the hypocrisy of others, replied De Laurent. Violent effects are only produced by violent means. They want to catch birds, and they talk of spreading cobwebs.

It appears, said Ned, that let human invention stretch improvement to what

point it may, every new spark of knowledge contains, or leads to, some portion of evil. The sword is made of the same material as the plough.

This would be melancholy reasoning in an *old man*, said the Frenchman; and it is not less true, because it comes from a *young one*. For my own part, continued he, I think I could be content for refinement and civilization, to tread back their steps to the *dark ages*, as they have been called; when wars were the mere temporary ebullitions of anger; when resentment followed insult, as the thunderbolt the flash, and the equilibrium of understanding was restored. It was reserved for the most enlightened periods of human history to reduce, by degrees, the rude etchings of rage into one comprehensive system of mischief and destruction. But this is a gloomy

subject; heaven avert from *your* country the horrors that have been experienced by *mine*.

Amen, exclaimed Ned.

I do not admire the haughty taciturnity of your people, resumed De Laurent; it appears so much like indifference, if not contempt.

Does not your dislike, said Ned, arise more from the ideas that you associate with silence, rather than from any qualities that are absolutely attached to it?

Perhaps it does, said De Laurent.

The garrulity of *your* nation, continued Ned, is in the other extreme. We attach to it ideas of officiousness and deceit, and are displeased. A

Frenchman does every thing by a *coup de main*. He shows himself to you *all at once*, and arrests admiration by surprise. He is like the showman that shows you his greatest curiosity first, and after which, we think his others not worth looking at. He is constantly saying more than he feels or thinks, and promising more than he is willing or able to perform.

This is caricaturing, said De Laurent. Every language has its *terms of course*, ready set for particular occasions; questions that need no reply, are spoken without intention, and heard without comment; this is common to all people and tongues. But you have censured that which I consider as our merit; namely, *straight forward intention*. I might ridicule the English for their obliquities. You always go in an angle to your pur-

pose; we take the hypothenuse. If an Englishman want to borrow his neighbour's horse, he'll first ask if the horse be at home. If he be at home, he'll then ask whether his neighbour is going to use it himself, or not. You always preach your sermon, and then name your text.

I question, said Ned, if this *obliquity* as you call it, does not arise from more honorable feelings than your eloquence and directness. A Frenchman would promise his horse if he were in use, and not lend him if he were at liberty. That our sermons frequently come before our texts, I'll allow. While a Frenchman is politely asking if you will take something to eat, an Englishman will put his bread and cheese on the table. I doubt, whether a hungry man would not prefer the sermon of the bread and cheese, before the text of the request.

This conversation was now rather damped by a shower of rain, and our travellers took a temporary shelter under a large oak. The clouds had gradually and unperceived been collecting. The light summer zephyrs that played coolly on the glowing cheek, were changed into sultry gusts, that died away in low and hollow murmurs. The birds no longer gambolled in the breeze, but here and there a straggling crow was seen, hastening with quick and level flight towards his distant home. Every thing indicated a storm. With a view to reach a more effectual shelter, our hero and his companion again wandered onwards. The rain as yet fell but partially around them in large heavy drops. The lightning played occasionally among the dark clouds, and the low-toned thunder appeared as though it rolled round the whole distant horizon. Night ap-

proached, and the black clouds that thickened on the sky, seemed to hurry on its reign. They were yet five miles distant from the town which they intended to reach, and knew not if there were either inn or house on the road. Now and then a horseman would pass them, with a quickened pace, that hastened from the storm; if they addressed to him their enquiries, he stopt not to reply, but answering as he passed, his voice died away in the wind. The rain descended more heavily; the lightning became stronger, and the thunder rattled in a higher key. Our travellers now took shelter in a barn, in which they partly made up their minds to spend the night. From here they contemplated the grandeur of the scene, though with sensations as different as their characters, their hopes, and their expectations in life.

The thunder having discharged its force, the rain continued, but in that steady and equal descent which gives no hopes of immediate abatement. It was now ten o'clock at night, and if our travellers left their present shelter, they stood a poor chance of meeting with another. The old man was weary and wayworn, and expressed the misery of his situation, by frequent groans and half-vented sighs. The trotting of a horse was now heard on the road, and Ned ran from his shelter to accost the rider. Before he could reach the road the horse was opposite to him, and he increased his speed with a view to cross him. The rider, however, seeing the form of a man gliding through the dark, put his spurs to his steed and set off at full gallop. Mortified and disappointed, Ned stood still, and half determined in his mind, to wait in the road till somebody else

might pass; he felt how hard the situation pressed on the exhausted energies of the Frenchman. He was listening to the sound of the horse's heels, when the noise suddenly ceased, as though the rider had been thrown, or had stopt at some not far-distant house. Guided by the impulse of the moment, he darted towards the spot where the sound ceased, but had not proceeded far, when he again heard the feet of the horse splashing up a lane, into which the rider must suddenly have turned. Following the direction of the sound, with his eye he discovered, at no great distance, a light glimmering from the window of some house. He immediately returned to his companion with the intelligence, whom he found shivering with cold beneath his drenched garments. Ned cheered him with the prospect of relief, and said that he could not plead

for an exhausted old man in vain.—They now departed together: the night was dreadfully dark, and the perpendicular rain fell heavily upon them. They quickly reached the lane, but it was so dirty and uneven, that it was with great difficulty that they made any progress. They now heard the scaring howl of the distant watch-dog, and after great exertion on the part of the aged foreigner, whom Ned was frequently obliged to assist, they reached the gates of a neat dwelling-house. Overcome with fatigue, De Laurent was placed beneath a small shed, while Ned preferred his appeal, lest the appearance of *two* claimants should too suddenly close the doors of charity in the human heart. Ned reconnoitered the house in hopes of discovering some female. Woman's sympathies are more quickly excited than those of men; the communication betwixt the ear

and the heart appears to be direct; but in a man it has to run the ordeal of calculation. Through the glimmering kitchen window, Ned espied a young lady playing with a spaniel whelp. He tapped at the door, and she ran herself to open it, but, seeing a strange man, was as quickly departing, when the word "*charity*," like a charm, in an instant arrested her steps. Brevity and force is the language of the heart, and nature pays immediate homage to her own laws.

A benighted old man is in danger of perishing for want, said Ned.

"Law!" said the light-hearted fair, and bounded like a doe out of the room.

I hope she is gone to her mother, thought Ned. He was disappointed;

she quickly returned, leading in a plain homely dressed country gentleman, on whose countenance nature had inscribed no index of compassion;—she had written her lessons only on the heart. His eye measured Ned in silence.

He is *calculating*, thought Ned; Ned was again disappointed. He was struck with the appearance of our hero; tall and elegantly made; his clothes dripping with wet, and splashed with dirt, even from his buskins, to the very blood that mantled in his cheeks;* yet with a mien and demeanour withal that bespoke ease and self-composure.

Where is the object of your charity?

Even at your very doors.

* Even his very plume, I say,
Was daggled with the dashing spray.
SCOTT.

The old man was now fetched in, and placed by the kitchen fire. The servants were called, dry clothes were prepared, and he retired to equip himself; but was so exhausted, that Ned was obliged to assist him. When they re-appeared in the kitchen, the host again surveyed our hero, as though he would say, *and who are you?* Ned was aware of his curiosity, and of the state in which he appeard. He asked what the distance was to the next town.

The next town? seven miles!

I shall reach it then in an hour and half, said Ned.

To-night? enquired the host.

To-night, said Ned, unless there be some inn upon the road.

There are robbers on the road, replied the host.

Robbers! echoed Ned.

A friend of ours, continued the host, has been attacked to-night near the bottom of the lane by a highwayman, who fired a pistol at him.

Ned recollected the horseman that passed him. Was he on horseback? asked Ned.

Our friend was, replied the host, but not the highwayman.

Ned could scarce refrain a smile.

The beautiful daughter of our host still held her father by the hand, and gently pressed it;—whether from fear *of*, or anxiety *for*, our hero, the LADIES must determine.

Come young gentleman, said the host, I don't think that you are a likely person to abuse our hospitality;—we

must endeavour to accommodate you for the night likewise. Ned bowed in thanks, and said that he would not slight a kindness so acceptable to the person to whom it was offered, and honorable to him who offered it. A change of dress was provided, and Ned was quickly and comfortably re-equipped. De Laurent, weak with age, and worn out with fatigue, after partaking of some refreshment, was conducted to his apartment, for the night. The host and his daughter were returned to the parlour, and Ned was sitting by the kitchen fire with the spaniel whelp playing at his feet, when his host reappeared. Sir, said he, as you appear to be a gentleman, we have been thinking that we can raise a game at whist for an hour, if you are not too fatigued to join us. Ned signified his assent, and was introduced. That is Mrs. Bidlake, Sir; the lady whom I

have the honor to call my wife. She was sitting in silken pride in an armed chair; proud and imperious as the arbitress of a nation; a mass of filth, rendered more odious by finery. Miss Bidlake, continued the host; the young lady slightly curtsied, and blushed. Captain Mark of America, added the host, introducing an officer. Ned's eye no sooner lit on the countenance of the officer, than it shrunk as tho' it had encountered a serpent. Yet he knew him not, though there was something about him that his memory instantly acknowledged. He appeared however to be entirely ignorant of our hero. They took their seats—Mr. Bidlake apologizing for his wife, whom some religious scruples forbade to indulge in such an amusement. Mrs. Bidlake and the officer had evidently disapproved of the introduction. Ned perused, and re-perused the counte-

nance of the foreigner, whom chance had now allotted as his partner in the game. A desultory conversation was carried on during the play; such a one as the game will admit, amid people whose attention is not entirely absorbed in the purposes of interest. Miss Bidlake, making some remark alluding to the escape of the Captain, Ned added something that gave a hint, that he should like to know the particulars. With an affected air of bravery, the Captain, in language which Ned thought very vulgar for his profession, recapitulated, but differed in some degree from his former narration.

You said before, observed Mr. Bidlake, that you saw the man before he fired.

It was so dark that I could not see any thing, said the Captain.

How then, asked Mr. Bidlake, could the man see to fire at you?

The Captain hesitated.

Law! you know it was owing to that, said Miss Bidlake, that he missed him.

My horse first startled at the report, said the Captain, and jumped five or six yards across the road.—

The horse then, said Mr. Bidlake archly, heard the report first!

The Captain looked displeased.

He then turned his horse round, said Mr. Bidlake, addressing himself to Ned, and gallopped after the highwayman, who made his escape over some railing which his horse would not take;—

notwithstanding he jumped six yards across the road!

Mrs. Bidlake now took up the cudgels in favor of the Captain, and Mr. Bidlake *laid them down*.

I've been attending too closely to the game, said the Captain, to mind what I've been saying.

You only revoked *twice*, said Ned, during the whole hand.

The Captain threw a vicious look on our hero; who had been attending more to his manners and the tones of his voice, than the lame story that he told. But the wicked glance he had just seen, kindled, as it were, his remembrance, and the dreadful recollection instantly rushed upon him. It was WILLIAM, his former fellow servant!

It was with some difficulty that our hero subdued his first emotions on this discovery: he however contrived to bite his lip and remain silent, while he adjusted in his own mind what plan to pursue. The game was now up, and our American Captain and Miss Bidlake became partners; and from many sly hints and insinuations that Ned had heard in the course of the night, it was evident that they were soon to become *partners* of another description. Is it impossible, thought Ned, that he should have reformed;—and may he not really be the character which he appears? He would probe him. He recollected however the situation in which he himself stood to the company present: He had marked the simplicity and credulity of the mother and daughter, and the visible suspicions of the father, and had no doubt but what William was practising the despicable

arts of an adventurer. He kept a strict watch on his motions; there was a vulgarity in his voice, and an unsubdued and untractable coarseness in his manners, which squared but indifferently with the character he affected. Ned's feelings were averse to persecution, and he was at that age in which it is common to act from mistaken notions of generosity. He played very ill, and the game was soon lost. They again drew for partners;—we are divided, said Miss Bidlake, to William.

For *how long?* said the father.

For ever, said Ned, emphatically.

William started and looked at our hero: but the intrepid glance of his eye disconcerted him, and he hung down his head. Ned and Miss Bidlake were partners, and the game began.

I hope you play with good temper Sir, said the sweet voice of his partner.

I hope *you* can complain of nobody playing otherwise, said Ned.

Miss Bidlake blushed.

Mr. Bidlake, who had before made some slight advances to know who our hero was, again hinted at the subject, but Ned avoided it by general and unsolicited declarations relating to himself; which, while they partly gratified curiosity, threw a commonness on his concerns that rendered them uninteresting. Mr. Bidlake, foiled in his purpose, touched on a subject which confirmed the suspicions of our hero, on the state of the family affairs. By making the doctrine of sudden acquaintances and hasty friendships bear on the situation of our hero, he ani-

madverted generally on the impropriety of such connexions. Miss Bidlake made a slight protest against the doctrine with her tongue, and a more powerful one with her eyes; she said that Lavater was a silly, sour old fellow; for every countenance pleased somebody, and what one person disliked another might fancy. Ned perceived where the disputants had arrived; he at this period had the game in his hands, and fixing an eye of fire on the delinquent before him, and playing with a rapidity corresponding with the impetus of his mind, he thus expressed himself as he finished the game. "Sir, neither Lavater, nor any other man can prescribe rules of preference or dislike to the human mind. *Nature* is the best physiognomist. If you would learn to estimate character from appearances, study *men* and not *Lavater*. If you would detect an impostor, do

not apply the rule and compasses to his features; mark his eye, and it will cower to your glance. It is through a man's eye that you look into his mind; if he be guilty, it will shrink from the encounter as though, thereby, it shut up the secrets of the brain: so the ostrich thinks, by hiding its head, to escape the sight of its pursuer,—but thinks in vain! Pursue a delinquent with a steady gaze, and you will disconcert him even into childishness; an embarrassed trepidation seizes his whole frame, and he would be glad to sink into the earth for escape."

Ned found that he was too effectually practising the plan he recommended. William trembled with a dreadful consciousness, that overwhelmed him with confusion; he had played every card wrong, and Mr. Bidlake lost all patience, and sat ruminating under his confirmed

suspicions. In the mean time, Ned scrawled with a pencil the following intimation on a slip of paper and conveyed it to William.

"I know you! Respect my lenity by an *immediate* and unexplained departure. Live and repent."

On reading it, William implicitly obeyed its instructions.

Mr. Bidlake sat abstracted in thought, and a general silence prevailed, till Mrs. Bidlake expressed her surprise, that the Captain did not return.

He will never return again, said Ned.

Mr. Bidlake started from his seat, and his fair daughter raised her fine blue eyes on our hero with a kind of

mixed concern, that expressed, perhaps, less anxiety than he expected. The blow was struck, and he must proceed. After a few introductory explanations relating to himself, he gave briefly the character of William—not with the exaggerating hate of a persecutor, but with the mild benevolence of a friendly monitor. He concluded his simple narrative by a humorous exposure of William's encounter with the highwayman. Mr. Bidlake arose betwixt astonishment and delight. Impelled by that oppressive kind of gratitude which manifests itself by a thousand modifications of gesture and manners, he shook our hero by the hand, as though he never intended to loose it again. He rang the bell, and not satisfied with that, he called the servants, ordered in wine, though it was now near midnight, and vowed that the morrow's sun should light him

to his bed. Mrs. Bidlake, though she could not but be aware of the service rendered her family, was not able to resist altogether the mortification that crept on her pride, at finding herself deceived in a point on which she most valued herself—her discrimination of character. Her fair daughter, however, gave our hero less exceptionable praise in her thanks and her tears. If the blush, perhaps of offended pride, played on her cheek, her eye, in tearful remuneration, strayed not unreluctantly towards her preserver.

On the examination of the servants, it appeared that William had been so secret in his departure, that they knew not of his absence. He had himself equipped his horse, and no doubt, had made the best use of his speed. Mr. Bidlake now entered into a kind of history of his acquaintance with this *soi di-*

sant officer, but not till his wife and daughter had retired,—lest the recapitulation should rake up the ashes of pride in the one, and give an unnecessary pang to the delicacy of the other. The statement was uninteresting,—a mere country-assembly connexion. A red coat, a dance, a few learnt-off compliments, an accompaniment home, and the guaranteed morning's call, with their etcetera, led to a more officious acquaintance. He was an American officer, *of great expectations*, as all adventurers are. It was ungenerous to doubt of his Kentucky estate, particularly as he had promised to sell it and settle in England. If his manners were less polished than might be deemed due to his rank, it might be owing to the state of transatlantic society. In short, the contest of objections had been given up, and the Captain had written to his agent in America, but

owing to the length of time that must necessarily elapse before an answer could be received, the match was to take place as soon as the virgin timidity of the fair could be prevailed upon to assent to a day. Such was Mr. Bidlake's statement. The composure of mind he now felt in being relieved from his doubts; and the depth of woe which he appeared by almost a miracle to have escaped, gave such a zest to the honest impulses of his nature, that he drank deeply to the health of Ned; and betwixt the juice of the bottle and the joy of his heart, was soon consigned to sweet forgetfulness. The best bed had been ordered for our hero, where he, in addition to the provocatives that had lulled his host, took the traveller's *penchant* of a long day's journey.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.